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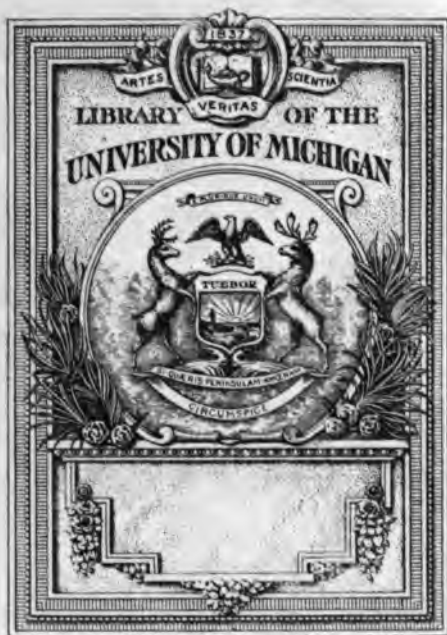
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LETTERS
FROM
THE MOUNTAINS;
BEING THE REAL
CORRESPONDENCE OF A LADY,
BETWEEN THE YEARS 1773 AND 1807.

Anne
by Mrs. Grant of Lagg

— “Memory swells
With many a proof of recollected love.”

THOMSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for LONGMAN, HURST, REES, & ORME, Paternoster-row;
J. HATCHARD, Piccadilly;
And Mrs. COOK, Bury-street, St. James's.

1809.



LETTERS
FROM
THE MOUNTAINS.

LETTER I.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

August 30, 1794.

MY DEAR MADAM,

THOUGH I had not received your letter inclination would prompt me to write to you without the stimulus of having any thing important to say; but if you expect me to be punctual, you must give ample licence for dulness and absurdity, besides a full allowance to my happy talent of digression, my rare felicity in parenthesis, and my peculiar knack at circumlocution. Do not let the solemnity of my parting with you too

deeply impress you. It was merely the effect of a momentary impulse, which I could not control. I am sorry it saddened so much of your journey. I too consumed the time at home in sympathetic dejection ; for the impression did not wear off so soon as these gusts of tenderness and melancholy generally do. The acuteness of my feelings, and the horror with which I shrink from the evils of life, are but short-lived in my mind, by a happy facility in rousing up images of joy and comfort, and catching at the bright side of every object, and every prospect. To a projector or adventurer, this might prove a dangerous faculty; but to one whose fate it is to walk peaceably (though sometimes pensively) through the obscure bye paths of life, it is an advantage to have a quickness in discovering every violet that springs up among brambles, and every rainbow that smiles through the tears of the sky. I think the soft melancholy produced in your mind by the music of your Irish piper, would have a sweet accordance with the sensations which those "sympathetic glooms" about Dunkeld are so well fitted

fitted to inspire. I, for my part, though a stranger to the art of music, am well acquainted with its power, and subject to its influence, in its rudest forms ; particularly when it breathes the spirit of that sentiment which, for the time, predominates in my mind, or wakes some tender remembrance with which accident has connected it. When my dearest little boy was in the last stage of that illness which proved fatal to him, we had three maids who had all good voices ; one was afraid to sit up alone to attend my calls, on which the nurse-maid agreed to sit with her, and lull the infant beside her. The solitary maid was then afraid to stay alone in her attic abode. The result was, that the three Syrens sung in concert, a great part of the night, which seemed to soothe the dear sufferer so much, that when they ceased, he often desired they would begin again. He listened to it three hours before he expired. I never hear the most imperfect note of *Cro Challin* * since, without feeling my heart-strings accord with it :

* *Cro Challin* is a sweet and very popular strain of pastoral, invariably sung in every highland fold.

"It gives a very echo from the seat,
Where grief is throned :"

and were I to hear those moving sounds,
which we are told

"Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,"

they could not open every source of anguish more effectually. You have it now in your power to taste the pathos of music in its full extent. Mr. Balfour, I am told, has unrivalled power in doing justice to our old plaintive melodies. We were consoled for your short stay by knowing you found his family at Dunchattan. ----- Charlotte is, and looks much better than when you saw her. This has been a day of joyful quiet to her, and no less joyful bustle to every one else. The servants, tenants, and Bairns are all busy making our great haystack ; Jock and the men drive carts ; the rest trample down the top ; and the two little ones are handed back and forward, or driven up and down in the carts, to their great delectation. Being Saturday, the stack must needs be closed to-night ; so they have no time to come down to dress dinner ; but a cold collation has been conveyed to the top of the stack with

with great glee, and devoured with alacrity. This is what I account one of the pleasures of a country life, to see so many people usefully busy, and innocently happy.

* * * * *

Mr. Grant rejoiced to hear the 9th regiment belonged to so good a man as Balgowan*. He is much better of late, not at all the worse perhaps for being chaplain. - - - - Robespierre's fall has had all deserved aggravations. Imagination shrinks from the images that such a death suggests. Of whom was it said that "Hell grew darker at his frown?" I wonder if the modern philanthropists, whose affections comprehend all, but those who might be the better for them; I wonder, I say, if they have found out a cool place for this minister of vengeance, or wrapped him in a corner of the wide mantle of everlasting sleep.

Adieu, tenderly.

* Colonel Graham of Balgowan possesses a great landed property in Perthshire; and represents one of the most ancient and considerable families in Scotland. For his taste, his talents, his courage, and his virtues, he is justly considered as one of the greatest ornaments of his country.

LETTER II.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

Sept. 21, 1794.

DEAR MADAM,

My last was to Mr. M. Since then, indolence and indisposition have induced me to seize the pretext of not hearing from you, as an excuse to delay writing. My better judgment however tells me I have no right to be ceremonious with you ; and past experience convinces me, that writing easily and fully to a real friend, will exhilarate my spirits, if once I could whip myself up to it. I have been just discharging a painful task of duty ; it is that of writing a long monitory epistle to poor M—y, whom I have a long while unpardonably neglected. I know she is cherished with the tenderest care, and has the advantage of having her moral and religious duties inculcated in the most forcible manner.



Did I tell you what pleasure it gave me to find your friend and favourite Dr. Maclean had given up that wild scheme of going to America? I was fond of that country to enthusiasm, and spent the most delightful and fanciful period of my life in it ; for mine was a very premature childhood. The place where I resided was the most desirable in the whole continent ; there my first perceptions of pleasure, and there my earliest habits of thinking, were formed ; and from thence I drew that high relish for the sublime simplicity of nature which has ever accompanied me. This has been the means of preserving a certain humble dignity in all the difficulties I have had to struggle through. Yet, from what I know of the alterations which the last twenty years have brought about in that country, and the still greater difference which other views and associations have made on myself, though I had it now in my power to return, my judgment would check my inclination. The paths that lead

from nature and simplicity, towards elegance and false refinement in manners, and artificial modes of living, do not indeed tend to happiness, but they slope with our inclination, and wind with our caprices ; though when too far pursued, they lead directly to selfishness and depravity. These paths can never be retrodden. When tired of the idle and frivolous bustle, and the vain empty pursuits, that fill up (I can scarce say diversify) fashionable life, we languish under the burthen of ceremony. The multiplied elegancies and conveniences, the various and mixed society which at first delighted, begin now to encumber us. Those pleasures lose the force of novelty, and our ripper judgment undervalues what we once thought essential to felicity. We now retrace our first and purest ideas of happiness ; the rural ease that dwells in the pastoral valley; the soothing quiet and artless innocence of the cottage; the solemn gloom of the forest, in which we wish to meditate undisturbed ; and the sublime solitude of the mountain, from whose elevation we wish to look down on low pursuits, and give a kind of repose

to the wearied mind. We forget that nature presents us with no unmixed cup of enjoyment. Habituated to the profusion of art, which accumulates pleasures till they grow vapid and tasteless, we do not easily reconcile ourselves to the parsimony of nature, which preserves its relish by a frugal distribution. We endeavour to return to those habits which long distant recollection has endeared, which poetical description has decked with beauties innumerable, but which are incapable of being combined and enjoyed together. Estranged from nature, enervated by luxury, and softened by false delicacy, we set about the experiment ; we find the cottage quiet indeed, but smoky, confined, and deficient in a thousand things on which we are become too dependant. The narrow bounds imprison us, the low roof crushes, and scanty light which struggles in through the little casement, bewilders us. The inhabitants we find innocent, hospitable, and willing to please ; but we are shocked with their vulgar language, disgusted with their uncouth manners, and tired with the sameness to which their nar-

row circle of ideas confines their conversation ; and we are unable either to descend to their topics, or bring them up to ours ; we find dull uniformity and listless languor in the valley, whose culture does not employ, and whose produce does not enrich us. The forest walks are damp and intricate, and its gloom melancholy and oppressive to us, who have not accustomed ourselves to reflect, but to observe and to find continual employment for that faculty among the busy haunts of men. In vain we climb the mountain in search of more extended prospects, and more exalted serenity : fatigue follows, and chagrin overtakes us ; the wind pierces, and the cold benumbs us ; the prospects are perhaps obscured by mist, or lost in dim confusion, and we hasten back weary and unsatisfied, from scenes that expand the soul, and tranquillize the spirit of that faithful lover of nature, who has never quitted her bosom for artificial joys, or wandered in the vain search of happiness not meant for this threshold of existence. It is indeed a singular effort of a vigorous superior mind, to preserve through life, the love of artless manners

manners and cheap pleasures. Your unequalled steadiness in this respect, is one of the strongest ties that hold me to you. Do not call this flattery. I cannot even flatter you so far as to say, that the disquisition I have just wandered into was meant for your amusement. Truly, I have amused myself by unburdening my mind, and arranging my ideas. If you too are amused, I shall not be sorry; and if, on the contrary, you are wearied, I shall not be angry. I have had your letter, and Mr. M.'s: more of them anon. I am glád that Charlotte thinks I look so well; I do not think so myself. Languor and thoughtfulness grow upon me, and I become less able and willing to take exercise. I rather think I resemble grandmother Eve, of whom we are told that,

“ So much of death her thoughts had entertained,
As dyed her cheek with pale.”

Yet you must not think me vapourish. That change in the mode of our existence which, is before us all, has become familiar to my mind from frequent perils. I can bear to

look at it, and wish not to be surprized by it. I am not so ignorant of the nature and importance of preparation for futurity, as to wear myself out in fervors of forced devotion, during this short period of suspended fear and expectation, in hopes of blotting out the errors of a negligent and self-gratifying life, by the feeble struggles produced, not by rational and vital piety, but mere selfish terror. I endeavour to repose my hopes on a nobler and surer foundation. The dim and tremulous light that comes in short glimpses to my mind, beams forth from merits far transcending what human duties can pretend to, or human efforts arrive at. I do not think I have a worse chance for passing through the approaching crisis, than any other person, worn out by many similar risks. And, if it be the Divine will to preserve me amidst my family, how will it lessen my after usefulness or enjoyment, by the having endeavoured to resign my mind to what must inevitably happen at some future period?—I am glad you were so pleased with the nymph of the Fountain, whom I have endeavoured to recommend to your attention,

tion, by making her both a Highlander and a moralist. Those light excursions of fancy, where

“ Soft description holds the place of sense.”

are merely the relaxation and play of the mind. Were I to dilate my 'awakened powers towards greater objects, and give vent to my feelings on subjects still more serious and impressive, where there is abundant scope for pathetic painting, among the sad realities of life, I should require to be more self-possessed, and freed from the pressure of the present exigencies. But that time may come. I can only add that
I am always yours.

LETTER III.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, Monday morn, 2 o'clock.
Oct. 17, 1794.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAD the pleasure of your letter, and
you may judge of my willingness to answer
it,

it, by my sitting up the past night to watch the dawn of Monday morn, that I might write without infringing on a better day. Don't smile; 'tis not superstition, but self-distrust; I make resolutions, and try to hold them inviolable. I should be satisfied with your good will, but would fain preserve a *deference* for myself. On this past day, the most solemn ordinance of religion * has been celebrated here. Many of the congregation live at such distances, and the service continues so long without interval, that we find it proper to bring down a good many people to a slight refreshment through the day. The assisting clergy sleep here, and three other visitors; so you may judge what bustle and fatigue all this must occasion to me, and how unfit I am to write; but you will make all allowances. I am very glad that same visit is over; and, though I have the very best opinion of the heart and understanding of your visitor, 'tis perhaps as well the affair is over; for, I suppose we shall hear no more of it. I felt exceedingly for the person in question. Yet

* The administration of the Sacrament.

we must consider how very particular her situation is, and how very dangerous it would be for her to incur the imputation of even a pardonable deviation from strict prudence. I startle at the thought of her being led to favour any thing so vague at present, and which might prove dangerous in future. She has too much good sense, and too much dependance on those whose faithful friendship she has experienced, to form any connection, (for what less is a correspondence) with any one in a precarious situation, who might incur blame on her account. Of this person's delicacy of sentiment I have not the smallest doubt; but that very delicacy, youth, and natural shyness, preclude him from that knowledge of the world, and, perhaps, of exact propriety, that would render the consequences which might result to her, obvious to his view. People of the character I suppose him to possess, are more likely to conciliate esteem and respect, in the sphere of their particular acquaintance, than to push their way through a hard unfeeling world. . . .

Will you
also

also tell Charlotte I shall write to her very soon, and inform her of many particulars which, I know, she would wish to be acquainted with. I wrote her a long melancholy letter, with the narrative of dear Petrina's loss, and all my distresses, which wore me out so, that I left off abruptly. I told her, however, how much I was satisfied with all she did. Tell her *** has been talking very loudly all the time I write ; so you may be thankful you have escaped his incoherences. I have a profusion of compliments to send you, but intreat you will imagine them. Adieu, dear Madam ! I am, in all humours, and at all times, much yours.

LETTER IV.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, Dec. 20, 1794.

DEAR MADAM,

ANGUS MACKAY comes so sudden, and stays so short a time, that I have barely time

time to acknowledge your two last favours. Your attention in the writing way, in this time of need, is very considerate; it gives a necessary fillip to the drooping spirits, to know that one is of consequence enough to be pitied and remembered by one's absent friends; and there is no one living more conscious of the efficacy of such a cordial. I shall not attempt to answer your letters in detail, being scarce able to answer them at all. All this day I am much indisposed, but am so used to these preparatory alarms that I am not alarmed at them. - - - - -

- - - - - There is nothing more natural than for a parent to be vain of the real or imputed excellencies of children. Yet, with me, much reflection, and some observation, have so far conquered that propensity, that I am not sure whether I should not be sorry to discover those tendercies to genius that some imagine to exist. Distinguished abilities are attended, especially in the *undistinguished sex*, with much risk, and much envy. Second rate talents, again, afford a pretence for imaginary superiority, which flatters and intoxicates the mind more than what is real.

In

In fact, I think pretenders are far more liable to self-opinion and affectation, than minds of a truly superior order. *** has reflection, taste, and an excellent memory, but has neither energy of mind, nor sprightliness of fancy, for any great effort of intellect. Whatever capacity she may possess, I have the comfort of knowing she will never use it invidiously or ostentatiously. Now that I am forced on thinking back on what I have done, and forward to the probable consequences, amidst the regrets I feel at not having it in my power, through constant hurry, occasional depression, and perhaps, negligence, to bring my children as forward as some others, in diligence, exactness, &c. amidst these regrets, I say, I feel a ray of comfort in retracing the unwearied pains I have taken in the cultivation of their hearts; and impressing upon them such just notions of the dispensations of Providence, and of their own peculiar state, as prevents their looking down on any one with contempt; while the same regulated views make them regard their superiors with a respect free from envy or servility. In short, I have laboured,

laboured, I flatter myself not in vain, without having often recourse to formal precepts, to make my children love virtue, and despise and detest every instance of meanness and malignity. I have so far felt the advantage of this culture, that, whatever childish faults they may commit, covetousness, envy, or strife have not, as yet, been known amongst them; and they live united by a bond of the most disinterested affection. Forgive this, and consider it merely as a soliloquy, with which I am comforting myself, when I feel much need of all earthly comforts, to go no higher. It would be both ungrateful and unjust to quit this subject of my children and my comforts, without owning, that I have great reason to account our joint charge Charlotte one of the chief of them; and should this be the last letter I ever write, I will not close it without making it a faint memorial of her faithful friendship, ardent gratitude, inflexible integrity, unexampled tenderness, and diligence of attention to all my cares and infirmities; of a character, in short, which every day rises, even upon me, who know her so intimately, and breaks,
with

with double lustre, through the gloom of adversity. I meant to say very little, yet I have said too much. I depend on your indulgence, and shall be, while I live, with the purest truth of affection,

Yours most sincerely.

LETTER V.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

March, 1795.

DEAR MADAM,

YESTERDAY, and not till then, I received your letter with the account of poor George's departure; which, as far as the change affected himself, was, I am sure, matter of gratulation. Well might he say with the patriarch, that, "few and evil had been the days of his pilgrimage." Doubtless, from the felicity of that new state of being, which, through the Divine mercy, he has now attained, he looks back on his past sufferings, as we do on a dream of misery that disturb-
ed

ed our sickly slumbers, when we awake to peace and comfort.

I do not wonder you should feel the pang of separation very severely, in spite of all that reason offers to reconcile you to the stroke. However eagerly we may grasp at delusive pleasures, we have but to examine our own undepraved feelings, to be convinced, that even the most painful exertions, arising from a virtuous sentiment, afford a secret, unspeakable enjoyment. Even the sadly-pleasing recollection of friends long since mingled with the dust, is endeared to us by the worth that sweetens their remembrance ; though the thought of them opens afresh the wounds that time has closed, yet we love to indulge it.

* * * * *

When such are removed from us, we follow them with regret, though certain of their happiness. No doubt we feel a sad vacuity in our hearts ; yet I believe we miss full as much the innate consciousness of exercising a benevolence so exalted, so utterly disinterested. Your merit of this kind has been great and exemplary ; yet
not

not unprecedented or singular. Cynic philosophers delight to represent all our views as terminating in Self. Yet, without having recourse to the annals of heroism, the domestic history of families affords so many instances of the virtue which I have been so long describing, and you so long practising, as may serve to overturn their frozen system. I understand too well the self-reproach you feel at what you think omissions in duty. My maternal tenderness was never put to so long, and so severe a trial; yet a consciousness of a failure in duty to a beloved and lamented child, will wring my heart, and oppress my mind, as long as I can feel, or remember.

LETTER VI.

TO MRS. F—R.

(Formerly MISS OURRY.)

Laggan, April 11, 1795.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I HAD your kind welcome letter from Goodamere in course; and you would think

think your attention well bestowed, if you were present invisible, to see the joy and pride of the whole family derived from your remembrance. I am charmed to find the oblivious matrimonial gulf has not swallowed up the image of your old unaltered friend. After ascribing abundant merit to you, I begin to take a little to myself for holding, so long, a place in such a heart. Mr. Grant observes, that I have told every one that comes to the house the wonder of your being as punctual since marriage, as before.—Your description of the present state of matters on the quarter-deck is very striking and impressive indeed. It requires much worth and wisdom to act the concluding scene decently, when there are no tender connections to keep the heart warm and open.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Your accounts of —— and —— have made me very thoughtful, and very thankful. Those who must needs tug through difficulties, such as I have always been environed

vironed with, are very apt to think, whatever face they put on the matter, that there is but one impediment to their felicity. Blest with comforts which wealth cannot purchase, they think the means of procuring some convenient elegancies, and extending their charity and hospitality a little, would make them competely happy. Even the gay social winter I spent in town was a most forcible lesson of instruction to me; in this respect; all the friends I most value, except Lady Clan*, who is wise enough to neglect forms, and live as she pleases, are slaves to the world, and to a world they condemn, and have been long disgusted with. For some reason or other, or form of policy, or convenience, elegant leisure, the nurse of fancy and of friendship, is sacrificed; life seems to glide from them like
V a dream, in pursuits which their reason despises, and among people against whom their hearts are closed up.

* Lady Clan, i. e. the Lady of Clan.—Clan was a favourite appellation given to Mr. Mackintosh, by his intimates, on account of his Highland enthusiasm.

“ O why

“ O why, since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us, and to die,”

should the few among us who understand its value, squander it so lavishly, and leave so little for active benevolence, social comfort, or elegant pleasures ; beside the great object of endeavouring to qualify ourselves for that exalted society, to which we aspire in an hereafter, divided as we are from that hereafter by so slight a barrier. Do not think I am preaching like a cynic from my tub, either. Though I endeavour to be satisfied with the station allotted me, and feel I have many blessings which are withheld from those who have more visible sources of enjoyment ; yet I do not deny that I feel the privation of some for which I have a keen relish : elegant society, for instance, after which I should languish, were I at leisure to languish for any thing. But my consolation is, that my time is passed usefully ; I enjoy the peace and quiet of the evening exceedingly, when my hour of leisure is sweetened by reflecting, that I have all day been doing some service, or procuring some pleasure for those I dearly love.

Even the unvaried self-same circle I move in, though confined and obscure, is interesting, because every thing in it connects with those branches of myself, in which I live and feel. I have no room for *tedium*; my occupations so crowd upon me, that I find every day too short for its allotted task. Thank God, my tasks of every kind are grown much lighter; my daughters are becoming assistants, and companions to me; the younger are now no trouble, this blessed sewing school is such a relief. Their improvement is inconceivable - - - - - So much for egotism once removed. After all the sacrifices you have made, methinks it would be a very meritorious one, could you bring yourself to stay with your infirm — who has so little comfort, while your beloved is destined to wander on the ocean. There, for your comfort, he may now wander in security, and have little to do but sing “Rule Britannia.” These vile French seem destined to do all their mischief on one element; like our witches, who, when in pursuit of a devoted object of vengeance, dare not cross a running water, that being
a boundary

a boundary by the laws of magic irremeable; a very comfortable regulation this for good nautical Christians. I know you have a strong plea against what I hinted to you about your —. You answer as the man did, who, being invited to some high party of pleasure, said, he had spent three quarters of his constitution for his friends, and was resolved to keep the fourth for himself. You have certainly been rather too long acting the part of Noah's dove, and I don't greatly wonder that you should not wish to return a second time to the ark. It is rather hard that you should have been so long the victim of caprice, and such successive and oddly varied caprice; all the worse, that the inflictors were people you loved, and who loved you as far as they were capable of loving any body; and meaning, forsooth, no harm. Yet daily experience will convince you of, what I have often told you, the state of a woman living alone.

This fatal war must of necessity end soon; it seems indeed drawing fast to a conclusion. Then you may hope for halcyon days, in the bosom of affection and tranquillity, with

your best friend, whom I truly love for deserving you so well. It is indeed time your storm-beaten vessel should come into port; but as this interim will be a period of disquiet and anxiety at any rate, what you cannot give to comfort, you may even give to virtue and self-denial, as you have done so great a portion of the time past.

----- Heartless beings !

I have no patience to think of them. I *do* love old prejudices, especially those which affinity and affection have entwined with the heart-strings. Innovation disconcerts us; new lights blind us; we detest the Rights of Man, and abominate those of Woman. Think then how I am prepared to receive your friend H. M. W.'s* new publication; though I admire her style, and confess that nobody embellishes absurdity more ingeniously. I am greatly inclined too to respect the purity of her religious principles. Yet when I think of the associates with whom her political bigotry has connected her, I think I hear the Syrian

* Helen Maria Williams, before she forsook her country or her principles.

leper

leper entreating the prophet's permission to bow a little occasionally in the house of their god Rimmon. Do you know your pupil's French is approved, and she is said to translate with purity and elegance. She passes this summer at home; great part of which I mean to devote to the task of forming a mind, that appears to me possess'd of solidity and stamina, which make it capable of culture, and worth the pains. Accept a thousand compliments, delivered in various forms; but you must be content with the aggregate. I have not room for a literary curiosity, composed for your sole emolument. 'Tis an epistle in French, which will go under the next cover. Farewell, cordially.

LETTER VII.

TO MRS. F—R, PLYMOUTH.

Laggan, Aug. 15, 1795.

Do you know that, by Mrs. M—'s friendly interference, J. L.* is an ensign; not that

* John Lowehlan Grant, the Author's eldest son.

that in this principle, that his time was come, and it did not avail. He took the ap-
proaches of death, and hoped no relief from
medicine, though his life was not such, as
one should like to look back on at that awful
period. Indeed whose is? It pleased the
Almighty to render his last scene most
affecting and exemplary. He died last
Tuesday evening; and, from the minute he
was confined till a very little before he ex-
pired, never ceased imploring the divine
mercy in the most earnest and pathetic
manner. People about him were overawed
and melted by the fervour and bitterness of
his penitence. He frequently and earnestly
entreated the prayers of good serious people
of the lower class who were admitted. He
was a very good natured man; and now that
he had got all his schemes of interest and
ambition fulfilled, he seemed to reflect and
grow domestic, and shewed of late a great
inclination to be an indulgent landlord, and
very liberal to the poor; of which I could
relate various instances, more tender and
interesting than flashy or ostentatious. His
heart and temper were originally good. His
religious.

this exigence have greatly endeared him
to us. -----

Give a little of your time to such another history. This employment of time will answer many good purposes. While it steals us a while from wearing cares and trivial occupations, it will perform a half miracle, it will recal the fleeting phantom, Youth; arrest the worst effects of time's silent progress. Yes, it will preserve the kindly propensities and tender confidence that are scattered fresh and sweet, like early dew in the delightful morning of life. Yet a while we may thus preserve the sunshine of the breast, and repel the unkindly frosts of cold suspicion and distrust, and the bleak sharp blasts of caprice and peevishness,

“ That make lov'd life unlovely,”

and force the callous and the crafty to say
at last,

“ The yellow leaf,

And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have.”

* * * * *

I grasp with avidity, the wish, the hope you express of our meeting once more. It were indeed a consummation devoutly to be wished, and I have seen too many strange things to despair of this. I think with you that I should love your husband; so much probity and tranquillity of temper would suit me, who detest art and finesse in all its shapes, and sicken at restless turbulent people, who are for ever in a bustle about they know not what. I do love a little constitutional philosophy.

Farewel, dear friend.



LETTER VIII.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, Feb. 20, 1796.

“WHY dost thou build the tower, son of the winged days? * Soon wilt thou depart with thy fathers. The blast from the desert shall rush through thy hall, and sound upon

* The subject of this letter was a celebrated and well known translator of ancient Scottish poetry.

thy

thy bossy shield," &c. &c. Do you recollect, dear Madam, when I stopped with you at the gate of B—e, I repeated those lines, and observed what a suitable inscription they might prove for the front of poor James's new house. It would appear I was moved by a prophetic impulse, when I predicted that he never would see it finished. Friday last, C. V. R. dined there. James had been indisposed since the great storm, yet received his guests with much kindness, seeming, however, languid and dispirited. Towards evening he sunk much, and retired early. Next morning he appeared, but did not eat, and looked ill. R. begged he would frank a cover for Charlotte; he did so, and never more held a pen. When they left the house he was taken extremely ill, unable to move or receive nourishment, though perfectly sensible. Before this attack, finding some inward symptoms of his approaching dissolution, he sent for a consultation, the result of which arrived the day after his confinement. He was perfectly sensible and collected, yet refused to take and thing prescribed to him to the last, and

that on this principle, that his time was come, and it did not avail. He felt the approaches of death, and hoped no relief from medicine, though his life was not such, as one should like to look back on at that awful period. Indeed whose is? It pleased the Almighty to render his last scene most affecting and exemplary. He died last Tuesday evening; and, from the minute he was confined till a very little before he expired, never ceased imploring the divine mercy in the most earnest and pathetic manner. People about him were overawed and melted by the fervour and bitterness of his penitence. He frequently and earnestly entreated the prayers of good serious people of the lower class who were admitted. He was a very good natured man; and now that he had got all his schemes of interest and ambition fulfilled, he seemed to reflect and grow domestic, and shewed of late a great inclination to be an indulgent landlord, and very liberal to the poor; of which I could relate various instances, more tender and interesting than flashy or ostentatious. His heart and temper were originally good. His religious.

religious principles were, I fear, "unfixed and fluctuating ; but the primary cause that so much genius, taste, benevolence, and prosperity, did not produce or diffuse more happiness, was his living a stranger to the comforts of domestic life, from which unhappy connections excluded him. Tavern company, and bachelor circles, make men gross, callous, and awkward ; in short, disqualify them for superior female society. The more heart old bachelors of this class have, the more absurd and insignificant they grow in the long run ; for when infirmity comes on, and fame and business lose their attractions, they must needs have somebody to love and trust, and they then become the dupes of wretched toad-eaters, and slaves to designing housekeepers. Such was poor James, who certainly was worthy of a better fate. His death, and the circumstances of it, have impressed my mind in a manner I could not have believed. I think we are somehow shrunk, and our consequence diminished, by losing the only person of eminence among us. 'Tis like extinguishing a light. I have been diffuse, perhaps tedious,

in what concerns the exit of this extraordinary man ; because I thought you might, like me, be anxious to know how people quit the world, who have made any noise or figure in it. His death found me sad, and has made me sadder. The sudden death of two poor men, our tenants, who have left young helpless families, which happened last week, threw a great damp over us. But I will no longer croak my funeral note : though death is ever present to my thoughts, not in his mildest form, I will " Give it, its wholesome empire ; let it reign."

Adieu, dear Madam !

LETTER IX.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH:

Begun June 19, 1796.
at Blair.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE past three charming days here, during which I have been soothed by the novelty

novelty of ease and leisure ; so immersed in the luxury of embowering groves, flowry walks, solemn shades of dark larches with drooping branches, that seem to weep over the wanderers that muse or mourn beneath them, or soft glades along the murmuring Tilt, where every vegetable beauty blooms in full luxuriance, safe from the nipping frost or chilling blast ; so lost, I say, in a dream of pensive musing, which I have enjoyed at full leisure, free from the restraints of form, and the disturbance of intrusion, that, like other people given wholly up to pleasure, I seemed to forget my friends, my duty, and myself. Nay, I began to consider whether it was most eligible to turn hermitess, or hamadryad. When the fair form of the virgin huntress of the woods, which adorns one of these sweet walks, drew my attention, I thought of sheltering in her haunts as a hamadryad : but when the opening of a long vista disclosed the Gothic form of the old church of St. Bridget, my intentions took a more orthodox turn, and I began to adjust the dimensions of my cell, and think of cold vigils and midnight prayers,

prayers. My head is now cooled; my visions are vanished, and I am considering how I shall get home to make frocks and mend petticoats. M. would tell you why Mr. Grant brought and left me here, till his return from Stirling. If I could spend some days in this sweet place with you, one of my first *little* wishes would be gratified; for I am now grown too wise to form many great wishes. I am just going; his reverence hurries me, yet sends you all many good wishes.

Farewell!

LETTER X.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

June 25, 1796.

DEAR MADAM;

YOUR very kind letter by Mr. Mackay gave me great ease of mind. His reverence, who delights in teasing me, and loves to hear the quick things I say when angry, would have it, you forgot me, was tired,

&c.

&c. &c. I am too proud, and too jealous to tire any one. 'Tis the easiest thing in the world to stop my career, either in prose or verse, particularly the latter, which I always begin with fear and trembling. The dread of making myself ridiculous, and being laughed at as a pretender to genius, haunts and terrifies me, whenever "the light of my soul begins to rise." But if the occasional short excursions of my fancy can give you a moment's pleasure, I should certainly feel that a powerful motive to indulge myself; for I frankly own, that the exercise of this rhyming faculty does now and then cheer the gloom of care, and blunt the strings of anxiety. I feel the same solace, which I suppose those who possess untutored powers of musical excellence do, in warbling their "wood notes wild," merely to gratify themselves and divert their solitude. After the confinement of the winter, and the sickly languor in which I had pined away the spring, I enjoyed the return of health, ease, and leisure too much, while at Blair, to cramp myself with any set employment. Yet a ludicrous accident had very
near

near set me to work. One afternoon I strolled down the approach towards the Duke's house alone, being unwilling to tax the complaisance of any of the family with attending me, and always loving a solitary ramble. I was thus deprived of the usual expedient of getting their private key to let myself into these elysian walks, in which I delighted to wander. The family that inhabit the mansion were not at home. However, hearing the Tilt murmur softly, and the birds sing sweetly within, I felt the true Highland impatience of bounds and inclosures, and observing that part of the wall was formed by the bridge of the Tilt, which was then very low, I scrambled, with an agility that would do honour to one of R.'s goats, down the parapet wall, and over the broken craggs below the arch, till I got in dry and safe. My joy at outwitting the keepers, and feeling myself independent of locks and bars, broke out in a few stanzas, which I have not yet written down. As far as my pencil sketch assists memory, they begin thus :

Thy

Thy jealous walls, great Duke,* in vain
 All access would refuse ;
 What bounds can highland steps restrain,
 What pow'r keep out the muse ?
 Where'er I go, I bring with me
 That mountain nymph, sweet Liberty.

Would you engross each breathing sweet
 Yon violet banks exhale,
 Or trees, with od'rous blooms replete,
 That scent the enamour'd gale ?
 Alike they smile for you and me,
 Like nature and sweet liberty, &c. &c.

There is a great deal more ; but I must not fill up with trifles a paper allotted to more serious subjects. I think, however, I ought to tell you, as the moral of my little story, how the fear of detection disturbed this stolen intrusion. I was resolved to meditate a while in placid ease, as if tranquillity would come when bidden, and sought the thickest shades, but

“ Still as I went, I look'd behind,
 I heard a voice in every wind,
 And snatch'd a fearful joy.”

At length I set up my rest under a broad spreading cedar, beside the statue of Diana,

* Duke of Athol.

which

which seemed to protect me. I thought of Dryden's description :

“ The graceful goddess was array'd in green,
About her feet were little beagles seen,
That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of
their queen.”

This figure was not so appropriate ; it was scarce arrayed at all ; and the crescent was the only mark by which the sylvan goddess was distinguished. Here, however, I composed myself, was busy with my pencil, and forgot my fears ; when, all on a sudden, a monstrous heron bent its heavy flight to my sheltering tree with such noisy impetuosity, that I started up in terror, thought of hunters and I know not what, felt the horrors of detected guilt, and finally took a short leave of Diana, and again committed myself to the protection of the nymph of the Tilt. Now you are to give this story importance, and make it instructive by your comments.

* * * * *

C. treats his wife worse, if possible, than you could expect. 'Tis miserable to see so much innocence, understanding, and good humour,

humour, sacrificed to such a strange compound of folly and madness, who has neither the spirit nor manners of a gentleman, to make one tolerate his eccentricities. I hope, nay, am sure, Charlotte will rather live, bloom, and die in single blessedness, than throw herself away in this manner. Now that in her apparent merit, and the general esteem she has obtained, I reap the fruit of all my cares, the agonies of fear and sorrow, which I have hitherto felt on her account, are richly paid in self gratulation. In trying to improve her, I have improved myself. My strenuous efforts for that purpose have exalted my mind above follies and frivolities, to which it might have sunk. The cruel singularity of her fate called forth in her support all the energies of my mind, and brought into exertion powers that I should not otherwise have known myself to possess. The kindness my other children receive from those who have no relative tie to them, I consider as a reward for my maternal tenderness to her. You see, my good friend, what it is to confer benefits on the superstitious; for I do not consider even you as merely generous
and

and sympathising, but as an agent, impelled by an over-ruling impulse, to do what you cannot possibly avoid doing. I write a few lines, below, to Charlotte. Excuse it, and believe me very truly

Yours.

LETTER XI.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, July 6, 1796.

I WISH to write both to you and Charlotte to-day, but shall begin with you: having conquered some scruples of modesty which checked my first intention, I shall bluntly avow the purport of this, which is, to request you would leave all the comforts and conveniencies of your own pleasant and spacious dwelling, all the beauties which summer scatters so profusely over the Dune, and all the pleasures of refined and elegant society, to encounter the fatigue and disgust produced by a long journey, over dark moors
and

and frowning mountains, by comfortless inns and bleak blasts; and all this for what? Will ye come into the wilderness, not even to people cloathed in the soft garb of insinuating manners, and flattering professions, but to be cooped up in a cottage, and share all its inconveniencies? To share them too with people who have lived too long out of the world to miss a thousand things become necessary in it? To such, mutual affection, freedom and simplicity, compensate for all the advantages, of which remoteness of situation and obscurity deprive them. I only suggest this, in case of your being left alone on the Dune; but if you have the remotest wish of joining the projected journey towards the south, I would not even wish to influence your determination. Only if you are alone, permit me to remind you of your resolution to make an excursion every summer; and, preferring the Highlands for your route, what would you think of taking forts William and Augustus in your way? Mr. Grant begins to recover his looks and spirits, but has had a fever shock. A succession of indispositions in the family, have made
spring,

spring, and what is gone of summer, pass like an agitated dream.

* * * * *

Mr. G. is just come in, and insists on having his sincere regards included with mine, to you and your beloved.

I am, unchangeably,
Yours.

LETTER XII.*

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Laggan, August 9, 1796.

DEAR MADAM,

I HOPE you have, ere now, safely received my letter from Blair, though it seems to have lingered on the way. I saw Mrs. Stuart put it in her drawer. If it has mis-

* This letter was written after an interview Charlotte and I had with four ladies, who came from Glasgow to Blair to meet us : these were, Mrs. Munro, Miss Munro (now the Hon. Mrs. Henry Erskine), Mrs. Macintosh Dunchattan, and Miss Coates.

carried,

carried, your loss is great, but Miss Coates's*, incalculable; for the immortality of her *Bandeau* depended upon it, and I have preserved no copy. It would have given me pleasure to have obliged that lady in any thing, because she is very obliging herself. Her frank, easy manners, and careless vivacity, together with certain emanations of goodness from the heart, had almost broken through all my outwards of pride, prejudice, and independence. In spite of all her adventitious superiorities, I began to like her. Had she been as little in the sunshine as myself, I am sure I should be fond of her; but the glitter of fortune and fashion, which has such an attraction for sycophants and imitators, repels people of spirit and delicacy, who value themselves and others only for such qualities as are innate and permanent. I allow her, and other rich people, all the merit they possess, and give

* Miss Coates is a lady well known in the west of Scotland, whose character is such as it appears in these letters. She left her *Bandeau* unconsciously on the tomb of Fingal, a place at least said to be such; and the little poem alluded to was written on this incident.

them

them much more credit than to others for the same degree of excellence ; because their manner of life is less adapted to exercise the sterner virtues, and keep the heart warm and open.

I am always jealous of hazarding the only thing of value I have to give, my affection, by giving it where it may be despised, or received as the common tribute which servility pays to the prosperous. I am far from thinking myself poor, but I cannot bear others should think me so. In short, I will merely like Miss Coates, for I am not poor in spirit. - - - - - My next care was, to prepare for Sandy's wedding, which proved, in his own way, a very splendid one. The day before the marriage, we had the bride's friends, with all the servants, dancing all the evening. The wedding-day, we had the same party at dinner, in the nursery. You are to understand, the bride served us eight years, and her swain seven, at a former period ; so we could not withhold our countenance. The *sheriff** is rich,

* Alexander Kennedy was called the sheriff in the parish, from the deference which the neighbour-
ing

according to Anne's estimate of wealth, and excels in strong sound sense. You know that he is our tenant in the glebe, which forms an additional tie. He is counted penurious, but shone on this occasion. Four fat sheep, and abundance of game and poultry, were slain for the supper and following breakfast, which was only served in *the Chinese manner* to the inferior class. At this feast above a hundred persons assisted, three-score of which consisted of our children and rustics, our tenants and servants, and the teachers of *arts* and sciences from the neighbouring hamlets. At the head of the long table was a cross one, raised higher, a humble imitation, I presume, of the *deise*, at which the courteous knights and noble dames sat in the days of Queen Guinever. There sat Capt. Donald, his reverence, and their ladies, with the professors of arts and sciences aforesaid, and Moome, in full glory; and C—, and K.—, and D—,*

had for his decisions on all occasions. His master considered him as possessing the soundest judgement and most acute discernment of any person in his station he had ever known.

* The author's children.

blooming and blushing like the morning. And there were poultry, and plovers, and a roast joint, and growse in perfection. All this was lost on Charlotte, who only afforded her dignified presence at breakfast. The music and dancing were very superior to any thing you could imagine. Don't whisper any thing so treasonable, but both were superior to many fashionable performers in each way. Mr. Grant took a fancy to be very wise and serious; and reproved the *sheriff* for killing so many sheep and collecting so many people; and wondered at me for being so pleased. I never saw him ungracious before; but he was not well. My versatility stood me in good stead. Every one was quiet, orderly, and happy in the extreme. I considered it was hard to grudge this one day of *glorious felicity* to those, who, though doomed to struggle through a life of hardship and penury, have all the love of society, the taste for conviviality, and even the sentiment that animates and endears social intercourse, which constitutes the enviable part of enjoyment in higher circles. It would be cruel to deprive such of the
single

single opportunity their life affords, of being splendidly hospitable, and seeing all those, to whom nature or affection has allied them, rejoice together at a table of their own providing; and of seeing that table graced by such of their superiors, as they have been used to regard with a mixed sentiment of love and veneration. I never dance, and on those occasions join very little, outwardly, in the amusement. I rather sit wrapt in reverie, or gaze in mute triumph at the collective felicity before me. The wedding was in a large barn. After breakfast, they danced awhile on the green, and the scene closed with the young couple going home. The following evening we had all the children to dress, for the concluding ball in our itinerant dancing school, so you must allow for my being fatigued with festivities. I am sure I have tired you with the history of - Anne's wedding. Had it been a fine ball, such as you are used to, I should not say half so much about it; but I thought the scene would be new to you. It is such, indeed, as cannot take place but in these regions; here only you may condescend

without degradation. But here only is the
line between the superior and inferior
classes : kindly me. I cannot exactly say
where the line lies : but cold disdain, on the
one side, and a glowing and unceasing envy
on the other, form my barrier between the
upper and lower classes with you. Your
low people are so gross, so sordid ; but if
you treated them as we do ours, they would
not be so coarse and hard : they are now,
however, past recovery. It grieves me to
think the iron age of calculation approaches
fast towards the sacred retreats of nature
and of sentiment : " the unbought grace of
life, the cheap defence of nations," is fast
receding. May I close my eyes in peace,
before its final departure !—Pray tell Miss
Munro, of whom I delight to think, and
could love, though she were mistress of
thousands, that I recollect the night we spent
together at Dunkeld, as an alderman does a
turtle feast ; but I fear the vigil was too
much for her. Had I been purse-bearer,
I would have urged a longer stay ; but de-
licacy kept me silent. On Monday a man
goes, by whom I will inclose a pair of
the

the Sybil's* garters for Miss Coates. I am grateful to that lady for encouraging the venerable Sybil's manufacture. She sang Lochaber and mournful Melpomene to Charlotte yesterday, very distinctly, if not

* Mrs. Machardy, usually called the Sybil by the author's family, was a native of the Isle of Sky, the widow of a worthy man who had served the *Highland public* fifty years in the capacity of a school-master. She was a person of undaunted fortitude, great industry, and ingenuity; and was remarkable for preserving all her faculties to the last day of her life, which was extended to a hundred and eight years. At ninety-six, she danced reels with great spirit, and sung the songs above-mentioned, when above a hundred. She looked up to the minister as her benefactor, because he procured her a pension of three pounds yearly, and allowed her a cottage on his farm for her abode. Till the year of her death, she carried on a manufacture peculiar to the Isle of Sky. In a small loom, of primitive construction, she wrought garters of gaudy colours and particular texture, which make a kind of ornament to the Highland dress, and are very much sought after for that purpose: these garters she spun, dyed, and wove; and the author was frequently an agent in disposing of them. Among the poems published by the author, is one sent, by the Sybil's request, with a pair of those garters, to the Marquis of Huntley, on his assuming the habit of the country.

melodiously, and will assuredly contend with Old Par. Her brother is alive, and is an hundred and four. In her I have the pleasure of an old woman's conversation, without the plague of gossiping; for, if she has any scandal, king William is the object of it. She is full of anecdote, but scorns to talk of any thing that happened within the last forty years. Madame de Maintenon is the heroine of her imagination; she talks of her as if she were still living, and constantly quotes to our girls the ivory wheel with which she spun Lewis into subjection; for she considers spinning as one of the cardinal virtues, and is at this hour spinning fine wool on the distaff, of which she proposes making garters for the Marquis. You see I will not rest till you are completely Lagganized. You must be interested in all my odd people, or I will have nothing to do with you. Ought you not? Am I not interested in your Neptune, and your great cat, and did not I commemorate your turkey-hen? The least you can do in return is to venerate my Sybil. Adieu! Tell me if I have tired you.

LETTER XIII.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, October 3, 1796.

DEAR MADAM.

I HAD the pleasure of receiving your letter, and am much consoled by finding you understand so well the motives of my grief for poor M. which I feel still a weighty pressure on my spirits. I feared you would consider the excess of my sorrow on this occasion, as absurd, or chimerical. Mr. Macintosh reproaches me for not letting him know of poor Moome's* difficulties; her noble spirit would have been hurt if I had. She was used to difficulties, and took plea-

* Moome is an endearing appellation in the Gaelic, to which the English affords no correspondent phrase; it means a person who feels the affection, and performs the duties, of a mother to children not her own. Such was Moome's love to the children of the cottage; and such their gratitude, that our friend was always distinguished by this kindly epithet.

sure, not to say pride, in conquering them. I believe one reason why I did not expatiate on her singular merit to you, was a fear that you should think I wanted to awake your sympathy on her behalf. Besides her inflexible sincerity, which was to some very unwelcome, her strong attachments, and the reverence she paid to merit wherever she found it, she possessed a sturdy independent spirit, which was her chief distinction. This made her submit to work, and to live harder than any one, that she might have it in her power entertain her friends occasionally, and bestow charity, without giving trouble to any one; and her exertions in this way were incredible.

* * * * *

Thus much of the

“Short and simple annals of the poor”

you will hear with patience. Yet is it not presumption to call Moome poor, who was so respectable, and gave so much away? Her personal wants were few, and small indeed; but her exertions, and the resources she found, or made, to preserve inde-

independance, and exert beneficence, were astonishing. Our children were the pleasure of her life, and pride of her heart. They were her theme wherever she went. None of the persons you ever served or obliged, could be so sensible of your kindness, as she was of your goodness to her son. Indeed, the generous are always grateful. She was as proud of Clan's* praise as the vainest of mortals could be of her own. She is buried with our children, under the shade of our evergreens; and, if ever we can afford it, we shall place a stone over her, with this inscription :

Sacred to the memory of
 HELEN MACINTOSH,
 Whose integrity was unsullied,
 Whose beneficence was unbounded
 and
 Whose fortitude was unequalled !

You must have seen the grief of her poor neighbours to form any idea of it. I perfectly agree with you, not only from the determination of my judgment, but from the sad experience of the heart, that the

* Mr. Macintosh,

D 5

esteem

esteem and affection of a truly worthy person is an invaluable acquisition, and the loss a privation unspeakable. It is with the utmost difficulty, that I can turn my thoughts from the painful retrospect of the hardships she suffered here, to the view of her present felicity, which is my only comfort.

Have you read Lord Gardenstone's Sketches, or detached observations, I believe they are? It is very much the kind of reading that you like. I never met with any one that thought exactly as I do of Shakspeare, of David Hume, and of Queen Mary, but he. In politics we should never agree. I am, &c. &c.

LETTER XIV.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Laggan, Jan. 21, 1797..

DEAR MADAM,

I READ in your last letter a kind apology for some harsh truths contained in your former. At the same time that my feelings proved their harshness, my judgment assented to their truth. I knew you could have no motive but zealous and anxious friendship, for entering so warmly into the subject. Perhaps there is none living who could worse bear the killing glance

“ Of hard unkindness’ altered eye,

That mocks the tear it forc’d to flow.”

But indeed I have not been used to bear it ; never mortal had friends more kind, or more constant, and more faithful than I have, from my very childhood. I never indeed looked for flatterers in my friends, and always bore their wholesome counsel patiently. It is certainly a venial fault to shew some zeal in extenuating the errors of those we ten-

derly love, and further you do not blame me. By this time you certainly pity me.

* * * * *

You never say a word about people I wish to hear of. Upon what object is the energetic spirit of Miss Coates employed at present? To be a good daughter, an ardent friend, and active manager, are all very good things in themselves, but not equal to filling up the capacities of her great mind, which could never have found room in a less body. Whether is that active soul, at present, animated by patriotism, enlarged by philosophy, or exalted by devotion?

Adieu! dear Madam! Convey to your family my sincere wishes, that each returning season may add to their felicity.

LETTER XV.

TO MRS. F—R.

Glasgow, April 7, 1797.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR most acceptable letter was transmitted to me from Laggan, a fortnight ago, and

and gave me great comfort. I see your heart and soul are all alive, and am convinced you will be the very same A. Ourry till the last hour of your existence. I likewise triumph in preseving my identity, and rising like trodden camomile, from every depression, whether mental, corporeal, or pecuniary. But you outdo my outdoings; tranquillity and moderate cheerfulness cost me an effort; but your spirit and vivacity are perennial flowers, which bloom all day and every day. These gifts were bestowed on you liberally, but not superfluously, when one considefs all the varied exigencies through which they have supported you. I think you have as much need of them in your present seclusion, as at any other period; though the sprightliness of your description sets some unpleasant things in so ludicrous a point of view, that one must needs be amused for the time. I sincerely lament what you must feel in seeing so deep a shade of imperfection in a character you love and venerate. It is one of the severest trials we can encounter, to be deceived where we expect so much. Old age and solitude

solitude, or, what is worse than solitude, living always with most uncongenial people, may have produced an infirmity, which, after all, we should compassionate. There is one who will never deceive you, who I hope is by this time on his way to protect and comfort you, who will both excite and reward all the best affections of your heart. When one sees how worthy persons of our sex are thrown away on the undeserving, a married woman is too happy whose husband has plain sense, pure morals, and an upright heart, of which his wife has the sole possession. Now, after saying so much of you, it is but reasonable I should take my turn, and give some account of myself. Knowing I am little addicted to complain, you will the more regret that I have been all winter distressed with a severe rheumatic tooth-ach, much aggravated by my attendance on poor C., during an illness, and my anxiety about Mr. Grant's going to Ireland with his son, while his health was so doubtful. In the spring I began to revive a little, and came here on the urgent invitation of my friends, who thought I was likely to derive
some

some benefit from the journey. Here then I have been for two months, as happy as returning health, attentive friendship and kindness, and general esteem and civility, can make me. My father has got a very pleasant house, surrounded by a garden and grass inclosure, near Dunchattan. I sometimes stay a week in town with my friend Mrs. Smith. Her husband has been very prosperous in business; and, amidst their newly acquired affluence, they possess a high degree of the public esteem, to which they are well entitled, both from their general beneficence and hospitality, and from the moderation and simplicity they preserve amidst this high distinction of every kind. After an interval of nine years, she had a fine boy lately. They are very happy too in their eldest son, who promises to be all they would pray for; but he is rather delicate in his constitution. The circle is never complete. I think Swift and Co. or some of those old friends of ours, remark that they have seldom met with superior powers of understanding joined to amiable qualities in a woman, but that there was a
balance

balance of bad health to be set on the opposite side of the account. Amiable men are very scarce indeed; I do not know a dozen in my whole acquaintance; and, alas! I fear the same rule will apply to them. I don't mean a satire on the sex; I know good, worthy, and respectable men; but where soft manners, and a pure and delicate mind are added, I call the man amiable; and so does the world; for every one is delighted with an amiable man.—The alteration here strikes me more forcibly than when I was in town last, because I have longer days to look about me. I see nothing but what reminds me of an old song, where a poor Highlander says

“ Scotlant pe turn'd an Englant new.”

We have all manner of luxuries, pastry shops, and toy shops. I remember when there could not be a doll or a tart bought in town, but in a particular shop allotted for each. As for the luxuries of intellect, circulating libraries, &c. there is no end of them. There is a lecture, founded by the will of a late professor, that is to exalt and illuminate the citizens prodigiously. The lecturer

lecturer appears a very good, and, I am told, is a very learned man; though I despair of learning much from him. It might be a very harmless lounge for his female auditory, if the idea of being greatly the wiser, for hearing a man talk an hour about carbon and chemistry, would not lead to conceit and affectation. The having an additional place of public resort, too, encourages that insatiable love of change, that restlessness, which is, I think, the great and growing evil of the age. Shakspeare talks of minds

“That cream and mantle like a standing pool.”

Modern minds will not be long enough quiet to allow the cream to rise. I always thought a moderate knowledge of geography and history a very desirable acquisition for a woman; because it qualifies her for mingling in solid and rational conversation, and makes her more a companion for her husband, and brother, and so forth. The more pleasing and attainable branches of belles-letters lie within her own province, that of the imagination and the heart. What business women have with any science but that which serves to improve and adorn conversation,

conversation, I cannot comprehend. For my own part, I cannot conceive a woman devoting her whole time and faculties to the study of any particular art or science. This must be done by one who has an ambition to attain any degree of excellence; and why should any one plague herself and other people with dabbling and skimming the surface of such subjects? If a woman were to talk profoundly on philosophy, astronomy, or chemistry, for instance, very few would understand her; if she talked on such subjects in a conceited superficial manner, no mortal would wish to hear her. That knowledge which neither improves the heart nor meliorates the temper, which makes us neither more useful nor more pleasing, I cannot consider as a desirable acquisition. I wish people would begin to work tapestry again. I look on my Dresden apron with great delight, when I consider how peaceably I sat to work at it, with my thoughts at liberty for reflection, and all the time forming the habits of quiet application and the love of peace. I have no ambition to hear the modern belles declare their *dark sayings*

sayings on the harp, till such time as I am convinced that they stay more at home, have less vanity, and make better wives and daughters than formerly. I have teased you too long. You, who have no children to spoil, do not feel this subject as I do. I dearly love young people; the gaiety, the candour, the nature, the modesty one is so delighted with in young creatures who have an unsophisticated character,—all these are a great sacrifice to make to pert pretensions. Adieu! my dear friend. Age *shall not* be dark and unlovely to us, while we cherish our kindly affections. The best way to do this is to have as little intercourse with the world, and as much with each other, as possible. Retirement is certainly the only safe asylum for delicate minds and delicate constitutions:

“The world is frantic, fly the race profane,
Nor you, nor I, shall its compassion move.”

And we will not require it. God bless you,
prays

Your faithful friend.

LETTER XVI.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Lagga, June 8, 1797.

DEAR MADAM,

I HOPE this will find you in health and spirits; for, I assure you, (not even excepting Miss Pagan and James Smith) I have left nothing behind me that I am so anxious about. William, little Charlotte, and I, had a very pleasant day's journey to Perth. I found my relations there very well, and cordially kind, and was sorry I could spend but a day with them. - - - - - I had an agreeable day's journey from Dunkeld, or Blair rather, with Charlotte, who proves an excellent travelling companion; always cheerful, and full of observation, and easily silenced, when I wish to indulge my meditations. We took many long, considerate walks, for I dreaded Paddy's being overloaded. Indeed, the last day, when I began to fear for both William and the horse, they appeared to me like Thomson's man in the snow,

"Stung

“ Stung with the thoughts of home ; the thoughts of home

Rush'd on their nerves, and call'd their vigour forth ;

so that we reached home by sunset. The chaplain had come a great way to meet me the day before, but was disappointed, and would come no more. I found all the young tribe waiting at the opposite side of the river. Never shall I forget the extravagance of Charlotte's joy at seeing them. She cried in transport, “ The children ! the children ! ” fell into violent bursts of laughter, and sprang up like a frantic creature, while we were crossing. The rest were as happy to meet her. Mr. Grant and C. I believe felt their share of joy too, though they were not so outrageous in the display of it. C. looks thin, but most courageously combats the *azure demons* by dint of activity and exertion. She has all things in high order, and is become a great florist.

* * * * *

She is an engaging child,—quick, sensible, and very good tempered ; but such an odd, staring, sun-burnt thing, you have not seen. 'Tis quite an original,—not the least like the rest ;

rest ; and, I think, I like the creature with a different sort of love. The Chaplain is all good and forgiving, and does not reproach me for my stay so much as I feared, perhaps deserved.—There is nothing I look back upon with such regret as not having seen Miss M. oftener while in town ; and the more, because I flatter myself the regret is mutual.—What an endearing place home is, after all ; the dwelling of true consequence and genuine comfort. Moome, and Bar, and the prophet in his mantle, and all the satellites of the cottage, begin to move round their wonted orbits. See what it is to hear lectures ; even I am in a fair way to speak with tongues.

LETTER XVII.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Laggan, July 29, 1797.

I AM now in haste to thank you for a kind letter, which came just in time to abate fears and jealousies. Not that I think you can forget

forget me ; but you know unequal spirits and irritable nerves make dreaming people, like me, at times see things through a dark medium. 'Tis not on my own merit I depend, but on your constancy of temper, and knowledge of character, which must have taught you long since to relinquish the vain expectation, of meeting spotless, perfect friends, to which no human creature is entitled, fallible as we all are. Yet such expectations, unreasonably indulged, and justly disappointed, have made many a one go through life dark and chilly, without having their hearts opened, their countenances brightened, or their virtues invigorated by the cheering cordial of friendship. This leads me to congratulate you on your present enjoyment of this nature. I feel true satisfaction in thinking how much you and Miss Polson enjoy each other.

* * * * *

I will rather try to tranquillize myself by thinking of poor B., who, I hope, has paid her duty to you, and never felt or inspired a harshly painful sensation. C. is well, but looks thin, and maintains a most vigorous
and

and commendable warfare with dejection, by constant employment. - - - - - I give you joy of your heroic nephew's* arrival, and hope he will pay his duty to you, on your return from your Highland excursion, which I see is likely to be deferred to the shortening days, and weeping equinox. Consider the green delights of my elysium, Fort Augustus; the "Siberian solitude," as Johnson called it, of Stratherick; and the "sublime thunder" of Fyers. Not a word of the cottage, but that it contains your faithful friend. Farewell. If I see you again it must be here.

* Captain Grahame Moore, of the Navy, who had just then distinguished himself under Sir John Borlase Warren, in taking some French vessels on their way to a projected invasion on Ireland, and carried them into Clyde.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE been now nearly six weeks in perfect ignorance about you all. I leave you to judge how my busy imagination has wrought. To think you grown careless, is inconsistent with the general steadiness of your character. What then shall I think? I am sure you are of my opinion, that nothing less than a want of integrity, or very intolerable caprice of temper, can cause a breach of friendship. I never lost a friend in my life, that I know of. I have seen them depart to a better world, where I humbly hope to meet them again, with renewed and exalted affection; but I never lost one by change or unkindness. If I should meet with such a new species of affliction, you will be both the first and last to occasion it, for I will never, never open my heart more. Why multiply the ties that bind me to this vain world, or open fresh sources of affliction in the sufferings of others? You would

hear of poor Mrs. Macpherson's death, which happened very lately, near us. Hers was a truly useful life, divided betwixt the care of her soul, and the care of her family. She had real principle, and great probity, though she was not gentle and conciliating. One reason why she was not so, was, that the rigour of her inflexible veracity and integrity could not bend to accommodate itself to other people's deviations ; and she carried sincerity, if that were possible, to excess. I certainly ought to have grieved for her ; for, though too much engrossed with more important objects to look for much gratification in social intercourse, she invariably shewed marked attachment to me. But her case was so hopeless here, and so full of hope and assurance in what regards hereafter, that her death seemed a release, and apparent benefit to herself. Her boys will do very well : she has one girl, who is here now. We are all much pleased with the frankness and benevolence that appear in her disposition.—Let me know when we are to expect you. It must be after the 6th of August ; we shall then be solemnly engaged.

ged*. This could not be sooner, for 'tis only on the 2d that people return from the glens. One of the great concerns of life here is, settling the time and manner of these removals. Viewing the procession pass, is always very gratifying to my pastoral imagination. I rise early for that purpose. The people look so glad and contented, for they rejoice at going up ; but, by the time the cattle have eat all the grass, and the time arrives when they dare no longer fish and shoot, they find their old home a better place, and return with nearly as much alacrity as they went. I do love these vestiges of primitive life, that put me in mind of the plains of Mamre, and the flocks of Rachel. The season is fine, and every thing thrives and looks well, from our flowers and our children, down to our pigs and potatoes. You must come in time to see the flax under its azure bells, and the potatoes in full purple bloom. These humble rustic beauties have charms for me, beyond much finer objects. I will only add, "*Come and see.*" Adieu ! simply, laconically.

* With the celebration of the Sacrament.

LETTER XIX.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

September 9, 1797.

DEAR MADAM,

I KNEW, some years ago, a good-natured worthy creature, a great simpleton nevertheless, at Inverness. He, to his great delectation, prevailed on a fine, sweet-looking girl, who had more sense than himself, and of whom he was doatingly fond, to take him for better and worse. To be sure he was half mad with exultation, when he had gained his point ; and when their friends came to visit them, without waiting for their congratulations, he used to start up embrace them, and wish them much joy. A clever little boy, the same whom Clan sent out to Antigua t'other day, happening to be in the house, was quite scandalized at his want of propriety, and told him those people had no share of his pleasure, and that he had better be quiet and let them wish him joy. Now I feel much inclined
to

to follow my wise friend Frank's example, and wish you joy of the chaplaincy's being obtained for Mr. Grant, because I am convinced that you feel as much joy on the occasion as I possibly can. Nothing less than the power of procuring an essential benefit to a family we love and esteem, could indeed exceed our present satisfaction. Before I quit the subject of benefits conferred, let me detail to you the late arrival from Miss Ourry that was, for now there is no such person. - - - - -

Though the transition from this to potatoes is sudden and rather violent, yet as you know little things are great to me, you will be pleased to hear, that we have a crop of that useful root, far superior in quantity and quality to any former, and that our corn is also excellent. The cheerfulness of our work-people, and the soft serenity of the air, during these tepid gleams that Thomson speaks of so feelingly, have almost made us, this autumn,

“Taste the rural life, in all its joy”

and elegance. Never, never can the rural life be tasted or enjoyed by those who are

too rich to enter into rural employments, or who lead, that most insipid of all lives, a town life in the country. Those whose anxious views are confined to mere profit, who have their bodies worn by labour, and their souls by care, have neither leisure nor discernment to admire the face of nature with ardour. In this, indeed, the lower class of Highlanders excel all other low classes, being possessed of a superior degree both of fancy and feeling, and their pastoral cares including more, both of leisure and variety, than falls to the lot of other peasants; but, geographically speaking, numberless peculiar blessings are attached to the temperate zone of life, that middle state which Agur prayed for.—Charlotte is well, cheerful, and means to be very eloquent on the subject of *drapery* one of these days. Mr. Grant means to be equally eloquent on a more dignified subject. Now you are not to be surprised or over-dazzled, when I have thus announced the blaze that is about to break forth from these worthies. Adieu!

LETTER XX.

TO MRS. F—R.

Laggan, May 16, 1799.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WROTE to you fully last winter, and am sure you must have answered, if my letter arrived; so I conclude either it or the answer has been lost. I must now be brief and distinct in telling my sad story, lest an event I hourly expect should arrest my pen, or perhaps finally close the scene. All spring I meant to write, but the perturbation of my mind, and the wearing anguish of suspense, put it out of my power. I cannot detail, but shall sketch as well as I can. My dear, dear, John, the most benevolent, sincere, and affectionate of human beings, who knew no stain of vice or meanness, but was all made of honour, truth, and generosity, was called away from a world that was not worthy of so much innocence and integrity, on the third of April last, two months after he had completed his fifteenth year. Judge

how severe this must be under the weakness and apprehension of my present circumstances. Yet it has pleased God to support me, in a singular and unhopèd for manner, under this overwhelming calamity. If my sorrow was great, so were my consolations ; and I have been enabled to look with gratitude to my remaining mercies. I can think of the past with composure, nay at times with a mournful complacency. Mr. Grant sends love to you. He bears up like a Christian ; but from what he feels, and what he fears, is really an object of pity. Charlotte is here just now, come to attend me on the approaching accasion. This is very inconvenient, and an exertion of more than filial piety. To compass it, she defers the happiness of an amiable and deserving man, to whom she is about to be united. She paid constant attention to her cousin during his illness. He died in his grandfather's house. He expected his fate for a month before ; his patience and resignation were singular and exemplary. That sense of piety which sunk deep and early into his mind, continued unimpaired during

during his short journey through life, and supported him in the close of it.

LETTER XXI.

TO MRS. BROWN, GLASGOW.

Laggan, May 7, 1800.

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN.

WHY am I so dead to memory ? If you and your sister thought half as much of me as I do of you, you could not be so forgetful and silent. Yet I will not blame you. I hear from C—ne you are both much occupied in the hard task of attending your brother in an illness which appears dangerous. You may believe he and his family have my sincerest sympathy. His goodness of heart, and constant kindness and good-will to me, made me always take a great interest in him. I am extremely concerned to find, that the domestic comforts you all so eminently possessed have of late been, in different ways, interrupted and embittered ; but this is the

lot of humanity. The cup of sorrow is in constant circulation ; we must all drink, and most of us drink deeply. It is not material whether your turn or mine comes first ; the thing is, to benefit by the draught ; for it requires very little self-examination to convince us that we are unequal to prosperity, and unable to sustain it without either growing careless and selfish, or attaching ourselves too strongly to the things that perish, to the utter exclusion of those which are shortly to be our all. For my own part, the truth of the psalmist's emphatic description of our nature, that " Man walketh in a vain show, and disquieteth himself in vain," was never so strongly imprest on my mind as at this very time. There is not a person I care for in this country, that is not sunk in grief, from the loss of some near and dear connexion,—lost, some of them, in the most aggravating manner, by dreadful accidents, duels from trifling causes, and the scourge of war, which has so long desolated the nations, though we are but beginning to feel its worst horrors. In Holland, there fell five or six officers whom I well knew, or
was

was some way connected with. My reflections are to the last degree solemn and gloomy, and I still imagine myself surrounded by the hovering shades of the departed. It is lucky for me that the task of nursing, besides unusual exertions in domestic matters, which I am obliged to make, so far engross me, that I am not at full leisure to contemplate the dark scenery which imagination continually presents. Indeed there is no room for the play of fancy; real evil surrounds me; sickness, aggravated by famine, calls our attention daily, hourly, to new objects of distress. I once thought to snatch a fortnight to see my children, and embrace you both. But it will not be. The Pastor is appointed by the Duke to overlook the distribution of grain which he charitably allots to his tenants. He does not, on that account, go to Edinburgh, as he once intended; and I cannot leave him.

LETTER XXII.

TO MRS. F—R, AT PLYMPTON.

Laggan, May 9, 1800.

MY DEAR, KIND FRIEND,

I HAVE long been indebted to you, which is not usual ; and if you consider my multiplied cares and duties, you should not wonder at some wide chasms. But when there is an interruption, you may impute it to want of health, to the irresolute delay of a mind worn with ardent solicitude, and constant exertion—to any thing but the selfish chill of increased years, which I declare has never shed its torpid influence over me. An enthusiast I was born, and an enthusiast I will die. When I prefer my ease to the duties of friendship, it is all over with me, my faculties must be on the decline ; but while they remain entire, and my heart continues to beat, it will glow with those affections which have warmed and charmed it through the short journey of life. Time has
done

done little to alter me; and the impetuous tide of vanity and luxury, which has overwhelmed and pervaded all habitable space, has produced no other effect on me than exciting my scorn and pity. I declare, had I my pilgrimage to begin anew through the wilderness, I would not give my share of the endearing charities of life, my bustles and struggles to procure ease and comfort to those I love, my faithful friendships and

“ My humble toils and destiny obscure,”

for all that wealth and fashion can bestow. I have seen just enough of it to shew me how little is its real value; and could I get a little health, a little leisure, and a little sunshine, I know not whom I would exchange with; though I know very few would relish the state I am so reconciled to. But ease, liberty, and a kind of rough plenty, are become habitual to me; and I could scarce find them in the same degree any where else. Yet the kind of ease I talk of is quite a distinct thing from leisure; that is an inheritance I am not born to. I like very much the description you give of the manner

manner in which you pass your time, and almost envy your reading leisure of evenings, and your fine climate, and flower-garden. We are just beginning to have a little elbow room after the temporary pinch occasioned by setting out our children ; and now that we are easier and could do it, were I revisited with such an attack as I had last spring, it might be found expedient for me to go a little nearer the sun, though the little birds of those gayer regions should wonder at me, like an owl come into the sunshine. I wish you were not so fearfully remote ; Devonshire lies almost beyond the reach of hope. Yet I have a strong presentiment that I should yet embrace you. I have many inducements to bring me a part of the way, and do not make desperate resolutions, like you, of never stirring out of the place, though I have so many ties to confine me. I have already told you so much of what I think of wealth, that you are in no danger of being pitied by me for not being rich, according to the kind usage of the world. Nay, I insist, that in all modest and rational computation you are rich.

You.

You contrive to be beneficent, munificent indeed in one instance, after supplying all your wants; and then the luxuries of a library and flower-garden are yours in a superior degree, because both are, in a manner, of your own creating, and you taste them so exquisitely. At the same time that I admire your generous exertions for your little *protegée*, I regret the self-denial you must exercise to enable you to do what others, less self-denying, must and would do, if you did not save them the trouble. I think, as the world would give us no credit for our Quixotism, even though we were of consequence enough to be known as Quixotes, we must even laud and praise each other. The approbation of a dear friend is certainly the very next thing to the sweet whispering voice of interior self complacency. A fine prospect is a very fine thing, but a fine retrospect is

“The sober certainty of waking bliss.”

I can easily conceive the blank one must feel in the society of a person, however well meaning, who is neither cultivated nor susceptible of culture. One regrets to see one's companion

companion excluded from sharing one's best pleasures. Then one tries, and finds it sowing in the sand. I found a good soil, and was richly rewarded. But indeed it cost me no little pains to unspoil, what early prejudices had done so much to spoil. I will not shock you with an account of this country, where the prophesy of famine seems about to be fulfilled; nor will I distress you with particulars, at present, of the death of your acquaintance. It was a wonderful occurrence, and shall be explained hereafter. He took a romantic fancy of going to hunt deer in the desert hills, for a Christmas feast which he had projected. He and three or four attendants, sheltering in a hut, were surprised at night by something like a whirlwind or avalanche; in short, they were buried in the ruins of the hut. You can have no idea what a gloom has overspread us. Mr. Grant was always partial to him. There are so many tender, as well as strange circumstances involved in this dismal tale, that the mind cannot shake off the impression. —My dear little good boy has cost me little in nursing, he was so peaceable. Yet
in

in March I found it necessary to banish him, as I began to give way fast. Anxiety for the dubious state of many poor people about us preyed upon my mind; even my unconquered spirit began to fail. Indeed my heart trembled all winter for poor Charlotte, who was in a very declining state, but Monday last I had the comfort to hear that on the 29th April she was safely delivered of a son. I am greatly relieved, and have heard since that she was in a fair way, I thank God, I am hourly growing better since. She has been soliciting for one of the children all winter; I am going to send Ourry for a few months. Mrs. Macintosh expected you would be much enriched by your uncle's death; but I told her to cherish no such vain expectations. Mr. Grant sends his love, and wishes you to know what an excellent fisherman he is become. I am quite serious; we are never without a dish extraordinary of his procuring. Our lilacs and laburnums bloomed last summer, and will now be in full beauty. We had such showers of roses! and we are so pleased with our little flower nurseries, under the windows! and all this in the very teeth of climate;

climate; while you sail on your botanic voyage with wind and tide in your favour. How much have I still to say! But I will leave it all unsaid, to beg that you may not wed yourself too much to your hermitage. Too much ease, convenience, and dominion, breed either apathy, or peevishness, just as people are formed. Spend a little time with Miss. M.; the revival of early and tender friendship renews the springs of life. You will relish your cot the more when you return to it. Adieu!

LETTER XXIII.

TO MISS GRANT*, GLASGOW.

I THINK I have it now in my power to fulfil the promise I made you, of sending you a translation from the Gaelic. You judge rightly, that I am vain of knowing so much of that original and most emphatic language.

* Miss Charlotte Grant; afterwards, Mrs. John Smith, of Glasgow; often alluded to in these letters, as the relation and *protégée* of the Minister of Laggan. There is no date to this letter; but it must have been written before the preceding one.

In

In my next, I will send you a literal translation, which I have by me, of part of an ancient fragment, a genuine one, remember, and hitherto untouched. The present subject, however, is modern. The mourner whom the bard personates, is, indeed, soft, modest, melancholy, fair; and the deep and real distress which the song commemorates, is yet recent. Mrs. Reid, a lady in the neighbourhood of Athol, went to the summer shealings in the mountains, with three remarkably fine children, a boy and two girls; the boy, who was eldest, was distinguished by a remarkably good ear for music, and, though but eight years old, played on the violin very sweetly. The children caught a pestilential fever, which some poor neighbor had brought up into the glen, and, being very remote from all assistance and the convenience and attendance that sickness requires, the death of all the children was the consequence, at a very early period of the disease. The bard, who soothed the sorrows of the parents by this composition, appears to me to possess native genius. Let him speak for himself:

“ Ah

“ Ah ! still must I languish,
Thus pining in anguish,
For my joy and my pleasure,
My heart’s dearest treasure,
The fair sun-beams that brighten’d my soul !
The loud storm blew boldly,
The bleak blast came coldly,
My sweet buds all blighted :
Forsorn and benighted,
Ah ! nothing can ease or console !

Where was beauty, fresh blowing,
Where was stature, fast growing :
Where was truth and affection,
Where was thought and reflection,
That so early appear’d in full bloom ?
At midnight when musing
All comfort refusing,
I hear, thro’ my groaning,
Your voices low moaning ;
O, speak to me once from the tomb !

The sighs of my mourning
Arise with the morning
And when ev’ning’s soft show’rs
Weep fresh o’er the flow’rs,
My tears fall as silent, unseen.
Who hears me lamenting,
But, sadly consenting,
Must pity my grieving,
Since heav’n, thus bereaving,
Has wither’d my fair plants so green !

The



The viol so sprightly
Who touches so lightly?
O, peace to its sounding,
My troubl'd heart wounding,
For my son shall awake it no more !

Nor my daughters, gay smiling,
My cares once beguiling,
From their cold bed returning
Shall banish my mourning.

Or hear me their absence deplore !

O, children beloved,
Where are you removed ?
Have you left us so early,
Who cherish'd you dearly,

For the dark silent chambers of death !
The fair sun returning,
Shall light the new morning ;
Fresh grass on the mountains,
Fresh flow'rs by the fountains,
Shall wake with the spring's gentle breath :

But no morning, new breaking,
My children shall waken ;
'Tis hopeless to number
The days of their slumber,

The long sleep that awakens no more !
Shall the cold earth's dark bosom
Still hide each fair blossom !
Have angels not borne them
Where bright rays adorn them,
Where on wings of new rapture they soar ?

On my fancy thus beaming,
My eyes ever streaming,
My breast ever heaving,
Their image relieving,
Shall soothe into pensive repose :
In beauty transcendent,
In brightness re-plendent,

I shall meet them where life has no close."

I have preserved, as far as possible, the simplicity of the original; but its tenderness, the solemn sadness that runs through it, its pathetic beauties, I am sensible I have not reached. I have left out many verses. Poetry in the ancient style knows nothing of concentrating thoughts. It was the object of undivided and unwearied attention, to minds susceptible of all its beauties, unchilled by interest, unhardened by vanity. Children of nature did not turn wearied and satiated from the expression of genuine feeling to listen to every rattle by which novelty allures frivolous minds. Now you have a modern poem, which, if I have not spoiled it in the translation, will give you some idea of the language of nature and true sorrow. The stanzas are in a form unusual and uncouth; but I could not think of deviating from

from the original measure, which is adapted to a wild plaintive tune, quite in unison with the sadness of the subject. If you set a due value on my effort to oblige you, I shall send you the "Tale of other Times" very soon; and am, with all due respect for your laudable curiosity, Yours, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

June—1800.

DEAR MADAM,

How has your letter soothed and fed my sorrows, my hopeless, helpless sorrows! For how can I remember without pain, and how can I forget her, whom long habit, ardent affection, and perpetual solicitude, had mixed with my very being, and entwined with every thought! Have I been a single hour awake, for twelve years past, without thinking of her? I did not meet with an occurrence at home, I did not see
a flower

a flower in my walks, without considering what she would think of it. Every thing is full of her; and it is so, and will be so. Still I see her graceful form; Still I hear the language of truth and rectitude, expressed with artless elegance, and forcible simplicity. Dear, ever dear, lovely Charlotte! whose purity of heart was too congenial to superior natures to remain long here, I would not give up the sad satisfaction of constant retrospect, ideal conversation, and anticipated re-union, for all apathy avoids, or vanity enjoys. Your feelings are so much mine, that to you, of all others, I will not attempt to describe them. What was she not to me, *daughter, sister, friend, counselor!*—and, what of all binds closest, fellow-sufferer, and fellow-mourner. Have I been so many years shedding tears, for her unequalled sufferings, and shall I now weep because she is released from them! The fleeting and unsatisfactory nature of all earthly things, will drive me for refuge and consolation to that source from which all that was lovely and estimable first emanated, and to which it hastens to return; and then
short,

short will be our separation, and great my reward. Dearest, best child of my heart! how wonderfully has she been led into light, through the gloomiest and most intricate paths. With the highest spirit and the strongest feelings, she was made to drink the cup of adversity of its bitterest ingredients. Prosperity, we are told, is a harder trial; of that she barely tasted, and was summoned to share the abundant mercies of her Redeemer, in whose salvation I have reason to think she humbly trusted.

I envy you, however, the last poor comfort of knowing what she said, and felt, and look'd, when the great change was approaching. I feel much—much for you; her affections were your dear-bought own. You were entitled to them, and could hope to enjoy them to the last: and true affection is, no small matter, to one who knows its value and its rarity. The Divine Goodness supported her to the last,—when she was enabled, (at the very time when nature was sunk so low that she could not attend to her own infant, even in this extremity) to entreat you to bear no remembrance

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LETTERS FROM

of unkindness she had experienced. May we be enabled to imitate her noble example, &c. &c.

Yours, ever.

LETTER XXV.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Laggan, Nov. 14, 1800.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAD a very kind letter from you some weeks ago. I felt it, as I feel every thing, in its full force and extent. I answered it from the overflowing of my heart, in the language of pure truth. I fear I shall never grow old, in the true worldly sense, but die in a hurry, some day, with all my sensibilities in full expansion. Yet a week's added age brought so much caution and reflection with it, as made me burn this effusion. I will take very good care not to risk being supposed a flatterer. I am sensible the glow of my affections, and the rapidity of my ideas, might lead me to say too much on a subject where

where I am deeply interested, but thus far I am safe. I never praise any one for virtues the person is not generally allowed to possess; though I might not think it necessary to publish to the world where my friends were deficient or blameable. But I am in a fair way to do well, when I have already begun to digress and egotize. I congratulate you on the gleam of comfort which lights up the declining day of your valuable friend Mrs. Dunlop; whom I regard with a kind of affectionate reverence, not entirely owing to her genius, or her virtue either, but that she has some singular notions, in which I have the honour to share,—that she regards objects with indifference that I think unworthy of attention, and admires, where I admire. Poor Ned Mayne!* What an honourable

* Edward Mayne, son to Mayne of Powis in Stirlingshire, an excellent young man; who, being on board the Queen Indiaman, which was burnt in the year 1799, in some port which I do not remember, as he, with others, were going into the boat, he recollected a passenger who was lying in one of the births below, and, being lame, was unable to make his escape. This generous youth immediately re-

nourable death was his, and how worthy of his unspotted life, At first sight, there is something very aggravating in seeing a valuable member of society snatched away in the very act of risking his own life to save another,—often, as in this case, from a pure motive of humanity, without any tie of previous affection. Yet in the course of my little reading and observation, this case has occurred so often, that I am convinced they are summoned in the moment of glorious exertion, that they may be taken away from the evil to come, and escape the temptations that might degrade or sully virtue so exalted. I knew a little of poor Ned's father once, and pity him exceedingly. So I do Mrs. Trumball, whom I like better than any one I know so little, because she is so totally disinterested. She will suffer more than others, but she will enjoy more. It is a short shifting scene at best : those who live merely for themselves will quit it as soon as those who live for others ; but they will have

turned, lifted the gentleman on his shoulder, and was carrying him upon deck, when the ship blew up, and they were both killed.

fewer

M. D. U.

fewer pleasing retrospects, and leave less regret behind them. It relieves me to hear you give testimony to the undiminished gratitude and attachment of our departed friend ; and I have no doubt of your keeping sacred a promise so solemnly asked and given, especially as the objects of it are not undeserving on their own account. What you say of her concluding sentiments is exactly what I should expect. Had it been otherwise, I should have no faith or trust in any thing human. I should indeed have been for ever haunted by the phantoms of inconsistency and insincerity ; though I should have had that best consolation, of leaving no duty unfulfilled, with regard to that much loved object of my long solicitude.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH.

Laggan, Nov. 23, 1800.

DEAR MADAM.

I HOPED to have sent your goose to-day, but cannot. He and the two blue cheeses, however, will, I trust, soon find their way; and with them receive an answer to part of your last letter. I have not yet seen R. to hear how well *you* look, and how merry *you* are. My *mirth* and *beauty*, which he celebrates, are not much increased this fortnight but, thank God, I am much better these two days. What is best, the whirlpool in my brain has in some measure subsided. Nay I find the relapse to calm sorrow, a relief from constant perturbation, "*Tha solas an tuireadh le sith, Ach claidhidh fad thuirse soil dorain*.*" As I cannot cure the evil

* This quotation from Ossian has been elegantly, and not unfaithfully, translated by James Macpherson. It runs literally thus: "There is enjoyment in mourning with peace; yet long mourning wastes the children of calamity."

habit of quotation, you see I have changed ground, and taken shelter in another language; but Mr. M. will translate it, or “try what *translation* can, what it cannot.” Yet what can it, when *he* cannot *translate*. This whimsical parody is not unmeaning, for the original is stronger, and softer than the sense can be given in our language *Tuireadh* we must have, but O let it be *tuireadh le sith* ! I make no doubt of what you say of our dear departed friend still hanging about your heart, and am sure she will continue to do so “while memory holds her seat.” If this is your case, amidst affluence, prosperity, and various society, judge what must be mine, in the utter seclusion to which I now devote myself,—in a place where seven years residence had naturalized and domesticated Charlotte so much, that her image makes a part of every scene around me. Though the agitated state of my mind has for some time interrupted that kind of mystic intercourse which fancy delights to hold with the souls of the departed, I gratify myself by paying a kind of delicate homage to her memory, in shewing

F 4

kindness

kindness to those she loved, and doing things that I think would please her. The most soothing retrospect I ever can have, is in recollecting the many conversations we have had together upon that awful futurity, which she has only entered on a little before us; being, perhaps, prematurely ripened by a succession of sorrows such as few experience. My thoughts hover perpetually over the grave; yet I trust in that infinite goodness which has hitherto supported me, that the gloomy prospect will be enlivened with some rays of hope and consolation. Speaking of those whom she regarded, her old friend Mr. Ewen, who is a sincere mourner, is returned from Sky, merely that he may die in this country; and, no doubt, that his last days may be spent near that once happy cottage, which was a central refuge for affliction, before it was darkened by successive sorrows. - - - - - I hope they will, at all events, respect themselves, and preserve their own esteem. It signifies little, when the short chapter closes, in what class one has stood: the great matter is, to have been near the head of that class. I would rather
be

be the first of peasants, than the last of kings; besides, the darker we find our prospects here, the more diligently we explore the light that leads to heaven. May that light shine on you, and comfort you, when all other comforts fail. So wishes

Your friend.

LETTER XXVII.

TO MRS. BROWN.

Laggan, Jan. 26, 180F.

MY DEAR MRS. BROWN,

I TOOK your last letter very kindly indeed, though my long delay in answering appears rather against me. This *young* family of mine, which seems destined to be ever young and ever growing, engrosses me more than ever, as I grow more than ever indifferent about other matters of this world. Not that I love my children better than formerly, but I love other things less. And though I have not, as yet, made any extraordinary progress.

progress in that easy and pleasant science of self-love, I still love myself so well as to fly the approaches of despondency, whom I consider as cousin-german to despair; and the best mere earthly refuge I know, is constant earnest employment. Yet I could contrive to find time to write, if I could find spirits; but all the melancholy events of the last year, with their more melancholy consequences, did so overwhelm me, when I endeavoured to write to any one whom I knew to be conscious of my feelings, that I shrunk from what used to be my consolation. My heart has been so softened, so melted by distress, that I feel more than ever the kindness of my few remaining friends. I cling to them in idea with a stronger grasp. The value you express for my correspondence, and the sense you retain of our long endeared intimacy, is a cordial to my sick heart. I am cheered by the reflection, how much providence has suited the kind and degree of comfort, allotted to me, to my taste and inclination; indulging my love of freedom and tranquillity, and giving me a warm interest in so many worthy hearts,
and

and making those, with which mine was most intimately blended, all I could wish. Without this, the world would have been a desert to me, and all its most envied enjoyments splendid trifles. You will rejoice to hear, after all the sorrows and sad privations I have suffered, that I have an increasing stock of comfort in my children.

* * * * *

Such have been my comforts under this illness. How many, many languish in vain, amidst splendour and affluence, for these high peculiar blessings, that can only be given or received by minds of a certain description.—How are Mr. Brown's monarchical spirits supported under the triumphs of the great consul? We are here all in sackcloth and ashes. I did not give myself credit for so much public spirit as this occasion has called forth. My blood really chilled with horror and anguish. Alas, for the poor Swiss! I fancy the wits of all your politicians are sharpened by hunger. We are better off than most of our neighbours. Our crop, I hope, will feed us till the new one

comes. I wrote to your sister about a commission of rice for the Duke's tenants, which I thought your brother might procure. We long to hear from you. Mr. G. joins cordially, in every good wish to you and yours, with your affectionate friend.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MRS. MACINTOSH, GLASGOW.

Laggan, December 17, 1801.

DEAR MADAM,

IF sympathy could alleviate the greatest of possible calamities, mine might be softened by the sincere and tender compassion of my friends, which is beyond what I could have hoped. Yours I believe to be not only sincere, but very painful. Willingly would I lessen your pain by shewing you how Divine mercy has enabled me to soothe my own. The storm of adversity has indeed been let loose upon me, and shattered my fabric of happiness; so frequent, so heavy were the shocks, that it is no wonder I lay
stunned

stunned among the ruins. But I have not abandoned myself to sinful despair ; I am gathering up the fragments to build a little hovel, where I may live the appointed time on hope-and recollection, and then die in peace. I will not describe my sorrows ; I will not tell you that when half my heart was torn away, the other half ached at the separation. All this you must know, for you too have a heart. But you have been too prosperous, to know how minds, not inelegant, are endeared to each other by retirement, and sharing sorrows and difficulties. But I meant to tell you my resolutions. Pecuniary evils I neither feel nor fear. God is all sufficient, and my trust in him unlimited.

* * * * *

Dear madam, what right have I to repine, when the time must needs be so short till the period that reunites us ? In the mean time, I will hover round his remains as long as I possibly can.—I cannot at this time write longer, or I would tell you how indulgent the Duke has been, in permitting me to continue somewhat longer on the farm, at the
old

old rate. Our affairs were in much better condition than could be expected, considering my husband's liberal spirit and numerous burdens. No friend need take the trouble of a long journey on my account ; my cousin, Capt. R., and our neighbour Clergyman, have volunteered their assistance, which will be quite sufficient. God bless you both !

Your concern about the pension, expected for the widows of chaplains, is very kind indeed. Mr. G.'s agent will enquire about it : if others get it, I shall. I have no peculiar claim.

LETTER XXIX.

TO MISS. DUNBAR, * BÒATH.

Laggan, Jan. 1, 1802.

DEAR MADAM,

So young, and such a novice in sorrow, you have not yet learnt the weakness, the

* This and some following letters were written in answer to one Miss Dunbar had, at her mother's desire, addressed to the author, condoling with her on the loss she had recently sustained.

extreme

extreme languor, into which the mind sinks when the first violent bursts are over; incapable of raising itself to the true source of consolation, and ready to lean on every reed. In this state sympathy is most availing, and in this hopeless and dispirited state your letter found me. - - - Why then apologize for what excites my warmest gratitude? Your dear worthy mother and you I have long known and esteemed, through the medium of your humble friend. This proof of your goodness to so great a stranger, convinces me that you are all I have been taught to imagine you. You wish to know how I bear the sudden shock of this calamity. I bore it wonderfully, considering how very much I had to lose. Still, at times, the Divine Goodness supports me in a manner I scarcely dared to hope. Happily for me, anxiety for a numerous orphan family, and the wounding smiles of an infant, too dear to be neglected, and too young to know what he has lost, divide my sorrows, and do not suffer my mind to be wholly engrossed by this dreadful privation, this chasm that I shudder to look into. A daughter,

daughter, of all daughters the most dutiful and affectionate, in whom her father still lives, (so truly does she inherit his virtues, and all the amiable peculiarities of his character) this daughter is wasting away with secret sorrow, while, "in smiles, she hides her grief to soften mine." - - - - -

- - - - - I was too much a veteran in affliction, and too sensible of the arduous task devolved upon me, to sit down in unavailing sorrow, overwhelmed by an event which ought to call forth double exertion. None, indeed, was ever at greater pains to console another, than I was to muster up every motive for action, every argument for patient suffering. No one could say to me, "the loss is common;" few, very few indeed, had so much happiness to lose. To depict a character so very uncommon, so little obvious to common observers, who loved and revered without comprehending him, would be difficult for a steadier hand than mine. With a kind of mild disdain, and philosophic tranquillity, he kept aloof from a world, for which the delicacy of his feelings, the purity of his integrity, and the intuitive discernment
with

with which he saw into character, in a manner disqualified him, that is, from enjoying it ; for who can enjoy the world without deceiving or being deceived ? But recollections crowd on me, and I wander. I say, to be all the world to this superior mind, to constitute his happiness for twenty years, now vanished like a vision ; to have lived with unabated affection together even thus long, when a constitution, delicate as his mind, made its unlikely that even thus long we should support each other through the paths of life ! - - - - -
What are difficulties, when shared with one whose delighted approbation gives one spirits to surmount them ? Then to hear from every mouth his modest unobtrusive merit receive its due tribute of applause ; to see him still in his dear children, now doubly dear ; and to know that such a mind cannot perish, cannot suffer ; nay, through the infinite merits of that Redeemer, in whom he trusted, enjoys what we cannot conceive—
Dear Miss Dunbar, believe me, I would not give my tremulous hopes and pleasing sad retrospections, for any other person's happiness !

happiness ! Forgive this ; it is like the overflowing of the heart to an intimate ; but your pity opens every source of anguish and of tenderness. Assure your kind mother of my grateful esteem ; and believe me, with sincere regard, much yours.

LETTER XXX.

TO MRS. F—R.

Laggan, Jan. 12, 1802.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have perused your affectionate letter again and again ; but, how shall I answer it ? Day after day, week after week, I have deferred, in hopes of a serene hour. To you, I could pour out my heart, and from you expect the sympathy this cold world has not to bestow. But two things I see clearly ; that mine is a growing sorrow, like other streams, widening as it proceeds ; and that I am utterly incapable of arranging my thoughts at present : one overpowering re-
collection

collection absorbs every thing - - - - -
Now that I have gone through this bitter narrative, * you will be sensible how sudden yet how aggravated, the stroke has been. Very delicate he was all summer, and much enfeebled, in consequence of his illness last spring. However, it was a delightful summer; we had got matters arranged to our satisfaction, and shook off some embarrassments that had arisen from the expence of enclosing, improving, &c. Our farm was well regulated, and productive in consequence. Bell came home, and her improvement, in every sense, afforded us great pleasure. In short, from different favourable turns with regard to our children and our affairs, we were relieved from many anxieties which had preyed on his delicate and sensible spirit. We were indeed all cheerfulness, harmony, and peace, enjoying the highest domestic comfort, and the most pleasing prospect of a calm evening of life. He was delightfully pleasant; I never saw him enjoy himself and his family more. A boy, the most promising one, the greatest

* This narrative is here omitted.

tie I have now to life, was sent us for a comfort when my dear John was taken away, and was the charm and amusement of this last fatal year. I never saw his fondness carried to such a pitch, though he treated all of them with the most endearing tenderness. My dearest Nancy, were I to chuse so long a period to live over again, at any time of my life, I think it would be the very half year, the close of which swallowed up my hopes of earthly happiness. - - - - -

- - - - - I will not torture myself with particulars. I had not ten minutes warning ; it was a thunder-stroke. Yet if sudden it was comparatively easy ; the doctor was not alarmed till the last half hour. I cannot either leave off or go on. - - - I thank God, no one can have better children. My friends, too, seem disposed to do all that can possibly alleviate what is incurable. The Duke * humanely indulges me in keeping the farm in the old way, till the period when it shall be found expedient for me to leave it. Our affairs are in better order than you could expect, when you consider

* The present Duke of Gordon.

a man so charitable and generous with so large a family. My intention is to hover round his remains here as long as I can ; and when I remove, it shall be to a town. You will hear something of me hereafter, that will surprise you, yet not more than it has done myself.

* * * * *

LETTER XXXI.

TO MISS DUNBAR, BOATH.

Laggan, April 24, 1802.

DEAR MADAM,

I wrote a hasty scrawl to accompany the poetical fugitives you wished for, which I sent to *Barr*, to be forwarded ; but *Barr*, “ whose meanest stars have shut her up in wishes,” has every inclination, but no power to transmit the important packet. So I must brandish the quill once more, though scarce able to lift it ; for I have been for ten days past sick, spiritless, forlorn, and dejected. I am no whiner, and love my friends

friends too well to inflict my sufferings upon them, when I suffer moderately. Indeed, when I do not positively suffer, I do not positively enjoy ; for which reason, it is more peculiarly my duty to suffer patiently, and enjoy gratefully. Now you will reasonably expect a definition of what I call enjoyment. It is, when the sensibilities of my heart are excited, and find objects worthy of them : it is, when I can meditate in peace, and return to my first love, the fair face of nature, with serene complacency ; at times heightened into an enthusiasm equally tender and solemn : it is when I can indulge recollections that exalt my mind while they soften it : it is when my sorrows are asleep, lulled by the cheering smiles of playful infancy, or the easy artless conversation of the young, the innocent, and the affectionate. I say nothing of the humanizing muse, her ladyship having, at times, a great propensity to point the stings of pain, and being, at best, but a capricious comforter. Now you must needs be tired of egotism ; but who such egotists as the sick and sorrowful ? and what so improving to the young, the gay, and prosperous,

prosperous, as to know how suffering may be endured, to know the ingredients of that wholesome, though unpalatable cup, of which we must all drink by turns! I owe you, after your patient endurance of this homily, some lighter theme. I must tell you the origin of the song Mary improperly called a translation. You must know, that in the progress of Highland society, there was a kind of intermediate state, to which a good deal of pleasing, fanciful poetry owes its origin. But then it is so local, so peculiar, so untranslatable, 'tis absolute sal-volatile. The heroic age, as you well know, was entirely divided betwixt war and the chase. Love, in such an age, appears not in a voluptuous or *seducing* form. Man, always born to suffer and to mourn, then suffered more severely, and mourned more deeply. Love was a solemn, serious passion, interwoven with the ruling one of heroic achievement. A man loved his mistress much the better, that he had obtained her by some warlike exploit, and mourned her loss the more, as it was generally attended with that of his far greater idol, honour.

He

He often won her by war, and supported her by hunting. This inferior war gave scope to those pursuits, that elevated their minds into that sublime melancholy with which their love, their poetry, and their music, were so strongly tinctured. When their extravagant and restless knight-errantry had almost occasioned the extinction of the Fingalian race of heroes, a new tribe appeared, more industrious and less enterprising ; in short, the pastoral age commenced ; and the first tenders of cattle were regarded by heroic bards, and lovelorn maids, (who were of course musical and poetical,) as a degenerate race, who had not spirit or ability to encounter the hazards and fatigues of a life of hunting. These are the sons of little men, so contemptuously spoken of, and indeed considered as the idle and cowardly part of the community. However, the tide of property and consequence changing, that prejudice changed with it ; the muse deserted to the pastoral vale, and maidens began to boast the peaceful plenty of their lovers' folds, and describe their herds and flocks with rapture. Others,
again,

again, praised the valour of their hunters, the wild variety of their pursuits, and the sylvan scenery they traced in search of their game. The authoress of the sweet wild strain Crochallin, provoked to emulation, extols her Colin's herds and flocks, and ascribes singular properties to them. They require no fold, no herd, no restraint. She dwells with delight on their beauty and swiftness.

“ O where are thy flocks, that so lightly rebound,
And fly o'er the heath without touching the
ground ?

So beauteous, so varied, so dappl'd their hue,
So agile, so graceful, so charming to view.

In all the wide forest, sure nought can appear,
Like the flocks of my Colin, my hunter, my
dear.”

All ends in the discovery, that her lover was a hunter; and the animals, whose beauty and vivacity she had been admiring, were deer, roes, and fawns. This I some time ago transfused (for translate I could not) into English for Mr. Thomson.* I have
been

* George Thomson, of Edinburgh, the friend of Burns and of the author, whose letters to the Ayr-
VOL. III. G shire

choice among such contending beauties ! I
 who delight in Scotch landscape and simple
 pathos, overlook songs richer in poetry, to
 shelter under the bard's plaid :

“ O wert thou in the cauld blast,
 On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
 My plaidy to the angry airt,
 I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.”

Or

“ Wander wi Jean in yon glen of green braken
 Where the burnie steals under the lang yellow
 broom.”

If I could indeed resist the soft attraction of

“ O wha is she that loe's me,
 And has my heart in keeping ?
 O sweet is she that loe's me,
 Like dew in summer weeping,
 In tears the rose-buds steeping,” &c. &c.,

If ever you know, as well as I do, what it
 is to have your heart wrung with agony,

“ On the past too fondly pondering,
 O'er the hopeless future wandering,”

you will feel the force of Isabella's com-
 plaint :

“ Raving winds around her blowing,” &c. &c.

Hear

Hear the true language of despair :

“ Life, thou soul of every blessing,
Load to mis’ry most distressing,
O how gladly I’d resign thee,
And to dark oblivion join thee !”

In extreme bitterness of soul we all should say this, if we knew how. One more elysian flower from this rich wreath, and I have done.

“ And wear thou this,” she solemn said,
And plac’d the holly on my head.—
Its polish’d leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play,
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

Let the doors of the temple of fancy be forever barred on those, who can read this without turning, involuntarily, to gaze on vacancy, and startling at the rustling leaves, when Coila flies “in light away.”

choice among such contending beauties ! I
 who delight in Scotch landscape and simple
 pathos, overlook songs richer in poetry, to
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LETTER XXXIII.

TO MISS DUNBAR, BOATH.

Laggan, May 4, 1802.

I now hasten to your queries. I cannot tell you how much I admire and despise Peter.* He is every way original, and most original in this respect; that I know not that ever any other object at once excited my contempt and admiration. His humour is most peculiar, most unaffected, most irresistible. Yet, for what end Providence entrusted a weapon so dangerous in the hands of one who avows his disregard to every thing sacred and venerable, is very difficult for us to conjecture. I am the more fully convinced of the bad tendency of his writings, from the amusement I derive from them, fore-armed as I am by a disgust at his want of principle and decency. Bozzy and Piozzi, however, is above praise,

* Peter Pindar, a witty, but low, and mischievous writer of verses.

and

and beyond censure : there the satire is so just, so pointed, so characteristic, that one can laugh without self-reproach. The *Louisiad*, however, I regard with a mixture of contempt and disgust. Burlesque spun out so long is loathsome ; 'tis a farce of five acts. Besides, to make royal weaknesses, should they even exist, a subject for ridicule, I think immoral as well as impolitic. This scandalous licence would be intolerable, though we were not, as now, ruled by a virtuous and exemplary prince. It is necessary for the good of society that we venerate our rulers, unless they oppress us by tyranny, or shew a corrupting example. Whoever applies a magnifying glass to every speck of human infirmity, shakes the main pillars that support government, the love and respect people have for their rulers ; and this is laughing at two great an expence. - - -

I greatly admire the songs of Burns you mention ; Jessey is exquisite. But my selection was from songs not so generally popular, but which have, to my taste, transcendant merit. From songs to sing-

ing the transition is easy, which leads to another of your queries. All my young people love music, but only those inherit their father's fine taste and passable voice, who are so happy as to resemble him otherwise. These are --- and ---. D— too has a very fine voice and ear. Musical talents we could not afford to cultivate. Paying the shoemaker's account for such a host is a serious affair. M— has, in most things, a very good taste. You may depend more on it than mine, ever blinded, as I am, by partiality. She thinks you have made the most of your subject; but it is not a happy one; nothing very lively or very tender naturally arising from it, giving no room either for pathos or gaiety. Your lines on your brother's return, which she met with in one of — written books, delighted her; so elegant, easy, and tender. You would be vain if you knew what so calm a critic thought of them. You dazzle and overpower one with Miss Frazer's character. I think I, too, would indulge her favourite propensity, if I had scope for it. Improving the face of nature
I had

I had almost called a divine amusement. She, who has made the desert to blossom as the rose, is the benefactress of the unborn as well as of her contemporaries. I was ready to cry out, on reading your description of her, "Lady, you are the cruellest she alive, if you will lead those graces to the grave, and leave the world no copy." Perhaps the lady might answer from the same author, "I will not be over-mastered by a valiant piece of clay," &c.

I have left no room for acknowledging your generous and highly successful exertions on my account, but I am run away with by Miss Frazer. I do feel a little exalted at knowing there are such women in the world. Remember me in all kindness to your unequalled mother. Adieu.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO MISS DUNBAR, BOATH.

Laggan, June 26, 1802.

MY DEAR, KIND HELEN,

* * * * *

THERE, now, is the requested freedom, which, as you justly observe, ought to exist between those whose *affinity of soul* is felt, and claimed by each. Besides, my matronly character, years, &c. entitled me to treat you if not maternally, a little *auntishly*. I need not, indeed, take much matronal consequence to myself, for, with my grown-up daughters, I live like an elder sister. But now to my delay. Your last letter, inspired by the very soul of warm, young, active friendship, would have charmed me in the perusal, though I were not, myself, the obliged and grateful object of that friendship. But, before I answer it, I must tell you, that I have just parted with two friends
whom

whom I may never meet again, and who have been both very useful in supporting my spirits during this period of calamity. The preparations for their departure have not only engrossed, but overpowered me. One is the book of books*, the revisal of which had almost turned the brain of brains before it was completed. The other is the daughter of daughters, who is now on her way to England, and has left me under much depression. But, resolved not to yield to it, many a hard battle have I fought with despondency, and often, as now, have I been playful, for fear of being doleful. If I had not a firm reliance on Providence inwardly, and an active mind, that impels and enlivens my struggles outwardly, how could I still exist, after the hard pulls my heart-strings have had? The motives, &c. of this journey I shall explain hereafter, for I never could narrate when my head ached. We spent "one day of parting love," as Burns says, at Dalwhinny, from which her young cousins, Isabella, and I returned to day. I took re-

* This alludes to a volume of poems, written by the author of these letters, and since published.

fuge in my haunt in the deep dell, where the Bronnach dashes impetuously over its rocky channel; there I scrawled a few lines with a pencil, which I will retrace and inclose for your perusal. But the meaning of this effusion connects so closely with the scenery, that, without a commentary by that *cool critic* Barr, you will not half taste it. Let her paint the landscape which she has so often seen (and felt); let her tell you how the Bronnach is born in the recesses of the Corry buy*, very near Charlotte's beautiful fountain. From this kindred stream it diverges, and turns its course towards our cotrage, before it descends from the eminence under which we are sheltered. Never, sure, in a quarter of a mile's course, did a mountain-brook assume such various aspects, and speak such different languages. Turbulent and hoarse, it first descends, over rocks and great stones, through the deep chasm which its wintry tumults have formed in the steep

* Corry buy is a name applied to a large verdant hollow, something like the crater of a volcano, near the summit of a mountain. It means, literally, yellow or flowery bosom.

descent ;

descent ; when it reaches the house, close to which it passes, the channel is stony, but not abrupt ; its murmurs are still loud but regular and not unpleasing ; a little further on, it runs over smooth pebbles. Its borders are verdant, and its sound equal and almost musical. Presently after, it enters a meadow, rich and flowery beyond all compare, fertilized by the overflowing of Spey, beautiful with luxuriant herbage, and diversified by the windings of this wandering stream, which becomes here a perfect meander, circling round so often, that it seems inclined to revisit its source. Its brink affords shelter, amidst the tufted flowers, to an incredible number of larks ; and its channel in this rich mould is so deep, that the sound is softer and sweeter than any other stream. When I walked alone, to indulge sorrow, I always went up the stream. How many tranquil evenings have I traced its wandering through the meadows, with those, who, alas ! will never more share my peaceful enjoyments ! But now to the purpose.

LINES

LINES addressed to the BRONNACH.

A small Stream that descends from the Mountains
in a remote Part of the Highlands.

Rude stream, that com'st dashing the wild rocks among,
And drown'st in thy tumults the pastoral song,
How oft thy hoarse clamours have soften'd my care,
When pining with anguish, or sunk in despair !

When nature lay hush'd in oblivious repose,
When nothing was waking but I and my woes ;
When the stars all beheld me with bright eyes of fire,
And bade me resign, and their Author admire ;

Then, where by my cottage thy turbulent course,
Like sorrow subsiding, diminish'd its force,
When the heart, overburden'd, could seek for relief,
Thy murmurs how placid, how soothing to grief !

When morn in fresh beauty enlighten'd the skies,
When the sun was preparing in splendour to rise,
Among the smooth pebbles, in melody clear,
Smooth gliding, thy waters more lucid appear.

But when in the meadows, at ev'ning's soft hours.
On thy borders I wander, 'midst verdure and flow'rs,
Where, hid in thy channel, in whispers so sweet,
Thou art heard in a cadence for sympathy meet,

My musings, tho' pensive, are free from despair,
While soothing, I feel the soft balm of the air ;
When from thy low banks, they ascend to the sky,
My soul seems to follow the larks where they fly.

When

When the sun from the west, with a soft parting ray,
Irradiates thy stream, where it mingles with Spey,
While to seek the wide ocean thy pure waters roll,
How sad, yet how tranquil the calm of my soul ;

The stream that with thee in the mountains arose,
In whose dark recesses your sources disclose,
Whose parting thy murmurs lament all the way,
Tho' forc'd from beside thee so early to stray.

Now again shall rejoin thee, and flow in one tide,
Nor part till to ocean together you glide :
How blest, who arrive at that sea without shore,
Where currents rejoin, to be sunder'd no more.

LETTER XXXV.

TO MISS MAXWELL PAGAN, BOGTUN.

Laggan, August 4, 1802.

MY DEAR MAXWELL,

I WILL by no means delay answering your
kind letter, though it costs me a greater
effort than you are aware of ; for I have
really got a surfeit of writing of late. First,
that

that tiresome collection* which I had to arrange for the press ; and now with answering letters which I had been obliged to defer till that task was concluded. Of these letters what shall I say ? I wish you did but see them. Of more than forty, moderately speaking, which I received on a late melancholy occasion, not one speaks *the cant* of condolence. Some of them are from people I never saw, though I know them well, through the medium of mutual friends ; others from *lang syne* acquaintance, by whom I thought myself entirely forgotten. Some of these epistles are singularly elegant, some piously affecting, some simply pathetic ; but it is very singular, that, among so many, there should not be one studied or affected expression, or one hackneyed phrase. They all breathe, in various tones, the genuine language of feeling and compassion for the living, of esteem and veneration for the departed. All this tender regret, for modest worth, hid, during the short pilgrimage of life, in obscurity ; all this amiable sympathy, for orphans, some of them too young to

* A volume of Poetry, before alluded to.

know

know the extent of their misfortune, and for their unhappy mother sinking in an unheard of corner, under the depression of narrow circumstances, accumulated cares, and an enfeebled constitution—form a powerful body of evidence against the prevailing notion, that every creature acts from some selfish or sordid motive, and that vanity or interest are the sole actuating principles. Behold, here are so many who have not bowed the knee to Baal, who are not entirely swayed by that world, which is at perpetual enmity with its Maker. What motives, but the purest and the best, could any one have for taking so warm an interest in those, who could promote no one's advantage, and gratify no one's vanity?

We have had letters from M. since her arrival in England, and even since she went to Devonshire. Her journey, which was full of novelty and amusement, and which, as far as possible, she has shared with us by her description, was rendered more safe and agreeable by the company of a particular friend of mine, a clergyman, who, being obliged to make an excursion for his health, accompanied

accompanied her to London, and on to Sidmouth, a watering-place, where she found her new friends, together with some others of their family. The elegance of their manners, and the cordiality of her reception, exceeded even her expectations, which had been highly raised by their previous correspondence. Here I must wave the true and entertaining of her travels, to recite something more extraordinary than any thing that occurred to her observation in that world of wonders, London itself, during her short stay in it.

* * * * *

I have not left room to tell you of the goodness of Divine Providence, as it appears manifested to the children of a worthy man, in the kind and considerate attention of many to their affairs. Know me always

Yours truly.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO MISS. DUNBAR, BOATH.

Laggan, Oct. 5, 1802.

MY DEAR HELEN,

YOUR return from Aberdeenshire was matter of consolation to me, on various accounts. My two great props, the book of books and M., being taken away at once, I fell into a relapse of despondency ; the image which must ever live in my heart, and dwell in my meditations, entirely engrossed me, to the exclusion or diminution of every other concern ! I never sleep much ; but, during this “ double gloom of nature and of soul,” I know only the painful transition from deep dejection to severe anxiety ; and, when exhausted by the labour of the mind, I sunk into a state that more resembled a heavy torpor than refreshing slumber. I waked with a sudden start, before the dawn, to horror inexpressible. Yet I never took more pains to soothe a sick infant, than I did to reason down the throbbings of unconquerable

conquerable anguish. All the singular instances of the Divine goodness, which have shone upon me since I was left alone in the world, I have made to pass in review before me, and reproached myself for sinking while thus supported. Were you ever struck with an affecting instance of the true sublime in the Old Testament? * it is where Moses, as it should seem, encouraged by being admitted into so near communion with the Deity, entreats that He would shine forth upon him in full resplendence :

“ Lord shew me thy glory.” — “ I will make all my goodness to pass before thee.”

What an answer ! how condescending its beneficence, how rich its meaning ! How cold must be the heart, that does not make the suitable comment on this emphatical definition of true glory ! Confess now that I do not use either to lament or preach to you. “ The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith.” I do not mean to cloud the gayest thoughts of gayest age, where there is so much reason to believe it an innocent and warrantable gaiety ; and I know too much of the source,

* Exodus, xxxiii. 18, 19.

from

from whence you draw your instruction, to believe it in my power to make any valuable addition to it. But, sometimes, the over-charged heart will seek in sympathy an alleviation, where there is no hope of cure. Your late indisposition and depression will make all this intelligible to you. I can assure you my concern and apprehension about A. L. was one of my terrors; and, through the gloomy medium in which I beheld all objects of fear, you yourself, you were another of my disturbers. Judge, then, whether I was glad when I got your letter, and whether I was grateful when I saw with what alacrity you went in search of A. L.; and how determined you were to think the best of her. I don't know whether I remarked to you before, that I never knew a creature who enjoys, in a higher degree that

“Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind.

which Pope gives to his vestals. She goes on rejoicing in her course all day, and every day; and this without animal spirits,—mere cheerfulness of heart. I am happy to hear your Aberdeenshire *jaunty*, as Burns calls it,

it, has been so serviceable to you. You have been quite in high life, where I should not like to have been with you ; for early did I say,

“Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you.”

But perhaps you will call this sour grapes ; not quite, neither ; I love elegance in sentiment, in language, in manners, though I don't care for the externals and insignia of it, nor can I bear it at all when disjoined from simplicity. Artifice, spleen, vanity, and false refinement, are the demons by which the upper regions of life are haunted. Must I confess that grossness, vulgarity, and indelicacy puddle about like pigs and ducks in the lower world. We made a little world to ourselves, where ease, simplicity, and a kind of negative elegance, gave an undefinable charm to our cottage. This made people of genuine feeling and uncultured taste like it, without being able to tell why. Sweet cottage ! must I leave it ? I will tell you, some time or other, how our poppies and convolvulusses nod into the low windows, and how richly the woodbine clothes the porch, where we have so often

sat

sat together, contemplating a mild showery evening, that would let us go no further. But what does this avail? I don't mean all this to detract from the merits of Miss Frazer's elegance, which, I doubt not, is regulated by her taste, as well as dignified by her virtues. Is lord Lyttleton son or grandson to the virtuous and poetical nobleman of that title? The verses he left at Castle Fraser, are sweetly turned. I give you joy of having "the dark rider of the wave" for an inmate; he will make a frigate of the house, in which the BRAMIN will be midshipman, you first lieutenant, and your mother master and commander. He will be an animating acquisition. I think, brothers are the only possessions I ever envied any one. For more than twenty years, the sense of this desideratum was effaced, but now I feel it more than ever. How rich are you in these enviable relations;—a mother that is sister and friend, as well as guide and monitress; and peace and leisure; and music and literature; and taste and health; and sense to set the just value on all these blessings; and sympathy to keep your feel-

ings from hardening in prosperity. Look round now, and see if there is any so happy. I leave you to the grateful contemplation of all these blessings. Adieu, Felicia ! - - -

I am sorry I mentioned ——'s eulogium of you ; a consciousness of that kind is destructive of ease of intimacy, and 'tis agreeable to be on an easy footing with a rational man who expects nothing. - - -

LETTER XXXVII.

TO MISS DUNBAR, BOATH.

Laggan, Oct. 2, 1802.

ONCE more, my dear Helen (and then farewell for a while) give me your pity and your prayers. Your dear mother whom I love and revere unseen, will give me her's. I will anticipate no evils ; but ask the Divine aid to frame my mind to something between hope and resignation, while I leave this groupe of orphans, loving and beloved as they are, to attend the sick bed of one whom
absence

absence and calamity have made best and dearest in my eyes for the present. I cannot now narrate ; but her recovery from a slow nervous fever is so dubious and unlikely, that Mrs. P—, obliged to leave home by an urgent call of similar distress, wishes, before she sets out, to have one of M.'s relations from Scotland, to attend her. I am the fittest to undertake this task. My anxiety would be doubled, if either of her sisters went alone in diligences at this season. * * * is too timid and too delicate. * * * has an arduous charge of various concerns, and feels too strongly to act properly among strangers, in such a trying emergency, I had your letter last night. It would give me pleasure if any thing could ; but my chief comfort just now is to recollect promises of divine consolation and support from Him who will not afflict above measure.

“ With the Patriarch's trust,

Thy call I follow to a land unknown.”

This passage of Young runs in my head like the prevalent idea in a delirium. I shall bewilder you as well as myself, by leading you into the howling wilderness through

which my mind wanders. Only this, let not poor Anne Ourry know of the impending cloud, or my departure - - - - - I am glad you and dear Mr. Mackay like her so well. Hers is the milder merit of the heart; but such a spotless heart, and a temper so unclouded!—In the depth of despondency I sometimes lay hold of a ludicrous idea to play with; such is that of your house being turned to a frigate. Don't mistake me. I know your brother* is no *mer-man*. Nautical skill as a man of science, and the resolute manliness of his profession, are, in his case, I am told, blended with easy manners, and an improved mind. No longer whimsical or sportive, behold me a suppliant for a life dearer than my own, and shivering with fearful expectation. May every blessing attend you!

* James Dunbar, Esq. who commands His Majesty's ship the *Astrea*.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO MISS DUNBAR, BOATH.

Glasgow, Nov. 7, 1802.

MY DEAR, KIND HELEN,

WORN as I am by the pressure of many sorrows, divided as I am between necessary occupation and many visits of sympathy which I receive, can I go to England, and remain for a time in dread suspense so far from you, without bidding you farewell, without expressing my gratitude for all your kindness to Ourry, so amply detailed, and so warmly commented on, by that paragon of grateful damsels? I hope this will find you in some degree recovered from the indisposition she lamented so much. Perhaps the time may arrive, after all these clouds are overblown, when I may, from the occurrences of my journey, and short stay in Edinburgh, furnish out an amusing detail; but now "chaos is come again,"—at least in my brain,—Since writing the above, I

LETTER XXXIX.

TO MRS. F—R, PLYMPTON.

Bristol, Hotwell-House,
Dec. 14, 1802

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I CAN hardly reproach myself for a delay, which elicited from you such a proof of warm unchanged affection. How gratifying are these lively marks of kindness, when the heart, stripped of its wonted shelter, languishes in a strange land, chilled and forlorn. I have now the comfort to acquaint you, that the benefit Mary receives from these waters, is beyond my hopes, so that her recovery seems nearly completed. This is wonderful, for there was so great an inflammation on her chest, that the doctor says were it not that she has a most excellent constitution, he should have entertained little hopes of her. I was treated with all possible kindness where I was, and owe
more

M. R. O. L.

formed me that her frequent relapses, and the danger of her lungs, made it necessary for her to remove to the hot wells, unless she soon grew better. The agony it cost me to relinquish my intention of returning to the dear family I have left, is unspeakable, but it must be. I should have gone yesterday, but could not forsake this poor dying girl. Last night she expired, and O how forlorn and friendless! No creature to bestow a tear on her departure, but ourselves. Why do I enlarge thus, or who can understand the state of my mind? Yet let me, in this wounding exigency, do justice to the unwearied kindness, the tender sympathy I receive. Who ever needed, who ever met with so much? All this is incoherence, but we must lay our account to suffer as well as enjoy with our friends. 'Tis a proud pre-eminence, and worth buying at a high price, to be a friend. I entreat your worthy mother's prayers; I know how you will mourn over the dear children I leave behind. Adieu, my dear Helen; I will write to you when I am more at ease. Peace be with you!

LETTER XXXIX.

TO MRS. F—R, PLYMTON.

Bristol, Hotwell-House,

Dec. 14, 1802.

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more

M. R. U.

more than I can express for sympathy and attention. Yet it is a great relief, in my present state of life, to be here at liberty. Without the uneasy sensation of disturbing the quiet, and poisoning the comfort of those who are deservedly happy, I would wish my comforts to be shared as much as possible with my friends; but my sorrows and anxieties I would keep as much as possible to myself.—This, sure enough, is a beautiful, dismal place; but though the mind were not like mine, overloaded, I wonder how people can taste pleasure where death haunts you in so many forms, that you seem to have entered his vestibule. The number of the young and prosperous that appear drooping like faded flowers about these “sacred springs!” and then to see the vapid, futile phantoms, in the form of nervous, splenetic, and hectic women of fashion, settling their card parties, and talking over their winnings, at the very pump, and in the very presence of the poor wretches for whom the grave is visibly opening! I cannot tell you how I am shocked at these incursions, that vanity is hourly making into the precincts of mortality.

lity. The crowds who elicit gaiety from each other, have the opposite effect on me. Accustomed to walk complacently round the narrow circle of those whom I knew and loved, I am not cheered or amused by the crowd here. It only impresses more forcibly on my mind how many are here that regard me with indifference or contempt, and how great the change. I am so cheered when our kind friends from Bristol come to ask for us ! but that cannot often be. I have, however, the very best accounts of the little flock at home, and hear my deputy matron does wonders. When a burden is laid on such young shoulders, there are generally great complaints ; but my young heroine conquers difficulties with all imaginable ease. Indeed she commands tried and faithful forces. For, as every thing I have, you know, must needs be extraordinary, no one has such faithful and attached servants. Of this I have had many proofs ; and in the depth of my calamity, it was a consolation to me to see, that the kindness of a most indulgent master had produced so much gratitude. I love to find these soft features of human nature

nature where one least expects them. Yet why not expect them? for if these people are uncultured on the one hand, they are unspoiled on the other. My health begins to yield to the pressure of intense anxiety. I cannot, must not stay an hour, when my patient is able to remove; but before she takes a long journey to a northern climate - I will endeavour to bring her for a single week, to see your retreat. Your gay painting of summer scenery must not tempt me; matters of the utmost moment depend on my reaching home by April. - - - You shall have proof sheets of the volume to exercise your criticism.* They have been transmitted to me, and give me the idea of a scaffold I am about to mount. But we shall discuss abundance of topics, literary and domestic, when we reach your Arcadia. Send me a bill of health in the mean time, and accept of your pupil's affectionate regards.

* This relates to the publication of the volume of poems.

LETTER XL.

TO MISS DUNBAR, BOATH.

Bristol, Hotwells, Jan. 20, 1803.

MY DEAR HELEN,

I AM sure, that distance, and sorrow, and care have not extinguished that ardour of benevolence, which was formerly rather excited and heightened by the causes that generally freeze the friendships of the world. I feel myself already in danger of moralizing and speculating. If once I wander into digression, farewell to order, connexion, and information; and to you, of all others, I am most apt to digress. Now for a succinct, dry narrative. Very dry indeed it will prove; for, from the harrassed state of my mind, looking back only to grief, and forward to terror, I heard things without listening to them, and saw them without looking at them. First, now, behold me in the streets of Glasgow, preparing to enter the mail coach, which was occupied by two gentlemen, one well dressed, well bred, and rather youthful

youthful looking, whose countenance bespoke good humour and intelligence; and much veracity of countenance he had, as shall appear in the sequel. The other,—how shall I describe him? for he was all chagrin at the time, and looking his very worst; yet, through his neglected, heavy figure, and harsh sun-burnt countenance, some gleams of the gentleman broke dimly forth; yet I really shrunk from him, and thought of Sterne's Smelfungus. He was sick and he was splenetic; and he did nothing but growl and murmur, and tell his grievances, all the way to Hamilton. But though he was surly, he was not vulgar; his language was that of a manly and enlightened mind, through which gleams of feeling and gentleness broke forth unconsciously. In short, by the time we reached Moffat, I thought him like the ghost of Matthew Bramble. M—, our fellow-traveller, softened him and amused me; he was intelligent, gay, facetious, and accommodating. He had been a few days before at Dr. M.'s, whom he seemed to know intimately. He is a native of Inverness-shire,

and had already been in both the West and East Indies. Laggan was familiar to him, but I could not make him out. At Moffat he went off, proceeding to London, but I took the west road, in company with my new friend, who, by this time, saw my distressing anxiety, and appeared to take considerable interest in me. I saved a hundred miles by this course. I had a letter to a lady in Carlisle, where I should have staid a night. Unable, in the ferment of my mind, to sleep, and unwilling to lose my fellow-traveller, whom I began to look up to with a kind of respect, I proceeded without sleeping; for, in a carriage, I never can. That day we could neither get a mail-coach, nor a partner in a post-chaise, so we took places in a right miscellaneous voiture, emphatically called the long coach, and very long indeed we thought the time we were in it. I never felt such degradation, or witnessed such depravity and grossness. My new friend was indignant, and disgusted beyond measure, and protested against any such association for the future; so, after vainly searching the good town of Lancaster for
an

an associate, we took a post-chaise to Liverpool, being now perfectly known to each other through mutual acquaintances. His name is ———; he is sovereign, I presume, of some little *grenadilloe* in the West Indies, and is married to a lady whose connexions I know, and with whom he appears to be very happy. He delighted in speaking of his children, to which, you may believe Desdemona did seriously incline, for I like those domestic traits, and he seems a fond parent indeed. We had many wise discussions on education, and much nursery discourse, &c. Besides, I, who love to know a little of every thing, know more now of West India matters than ever I thought to have done. This “fair discourse” brought us to Liverpool. There I found no rest for the sole of my foot, for M. “had murdered sleep.” You wonder I give you no account of the places I went through; I really cannot, we passed so rapidly. Only this, I did not like the face of either Cumberland or Lancashire, They were flat, bleak, unvaried; having neither the romantic variety of dear Scotland,

land, nor the mild features and rich culture which I expected, and afterwards met with, in England. Indeed the season, and my mind, were so gloomy, that I should scarce have done justice to Elysian prospects, and, I dare say, I did great injustice to Liverpool, which, I am sure, is a fine town, could I but think so; but my eyes, half closed, could not admit its symmetry, or contemplate its regularity. I was disappointed in their farm-houses too; for it is in that scene of life, and not among fine people, or wealthy citizens, that I look for discriminating lines of character, to be traced in their habits and form of life; but O, these are gross and unrural!—brick farm-houses, built on the very edge of the road, as if to stare at the excluded traveller; offices at the very end, without a rural court, or any form denoting taste or social order. They have, indeed, little gardens before, but they are such confined, formal, suburban-like things, that they banish the idea of rustic simplicity, nay, even of rural ease. Every place too is covered with tiles, which are my antipathy. My own dear cottage,
with

with its mossy thatch, its woodbine porch, its green court surrounded by shrubs, and its outer court of offices, the image of comfort and regularity, came sadly sweet to my recollection, like joys departed never to return. I heard, in idea, the roar of my mountain-streams, and the blasts from the hills of my fathers, while England faded from my view. I meant to tell you what I saw, and I feel myself vainly trying to describe what I felt. Well, but I meant to say, the formal wind-mills, and sluggish clay-coloured waters, made me recollect with painful pleasure the pure streams that poured, like melted chrystal, from our Alpine hills; and the romantic recesses and sweet waterfalls, where our Highland peasants grind their scanty crop. What pleased me most, was the distinguished beauty of the Lancastrian women, not void of the more attractive charms of grace and softness; for they have, for the most part, good figures; and with them, fine dark eyes are often united with a soft complexion, clear pale; which you must have observed, do not often meet elsewhere. I was absolutely dazzled, I do
not

not know how, when I saw so much beauty set off with so much elegance; for every one is dressed; and this descends to the lower classes. I am sure you are very tired, and will not object to my going a while to dream of the fair Lancastrians, before I proceed. I never had so much writing leisure since I was a girl, and I fly to it, as a refuge from "the pains and penalties of idleness," and those eating cares that follow where we fly, banish sleep, and embitter reflection.

LETTER XLI.

TO MISS. DUNBAR, BOATH.

Hotwell-House, Bristol,
January 21, 1803.

Now I come to reclaim your attention to my sorrowful pilgrimage. I do not much like the English towns; the streets are narrow, and, except those of Liverpool, they have all an unsocial look, that I cannot tell how

how to describe. Lancaster I should not include ; it is more cheerful, built of stone, and derives an air of dignity from its castle, which somehow brings the red roses and holy Henry, and

“ Anjou’s heroine, and the paler rose,
The rival of her crown, and of her woes,”

back very forcibly to my imagination. I have not terms of art to describe the castle ; but it is in a style of architecture which pleases me very much, and I have just negative skill enough to be sure it is neither Grecian nor Gothic. From Liverpool I set out about eight in the evening, most resolutely, but avoided the long coach. In the short coach, however, I found one gentleman, the top being loaded with drunken sailors. My companion was a Scot, and the son of a clergyman. In the morning, we breakfasted at the very pretty town of Litchfield, which appeared to me haunted by the ghosts of Johnson and Darwin, whom I could not get out of my head while I staid there. I saw a fine old cathedral, beautiful gardens, and for the first time clear streams, which Narcissus himself could

could not view with greater pleasure. Through what an enchanting scene did I pass afterwards; 'twas a part of Staffordshire, where I found precisely the compact image of plenty, content, and simplicity, that I wished to see, in the farm-houses. Charming varieties of rising grounds, luxuriant vales, solemn shades, and winding streams. Then such noble seats; such rich overhanging woods, drest in every mellow tint, from dusky red to the palest yellow; such a soothing air of tranquillity and comfort, and, above all, such visible possibilities of human happiness. I had no idea that mere landscape could have such an effect on a mind so worn with grief and anxiety. But the matchless beauty of this landscape was animated by cheerful countenances of peasants going to their early labour, and brightened by the first rays of a mild autumnal sun. O, how I enjoyed the drowsiness of my fellow-travellers, which left me at leisure to be delighted. At this rate, my paper will be filled before I reach Bristol. Suffice it then, that I arrived before dinner at the shocking, disagreeable, town of Birmingham,

mingham, where I languished in restless impatience all the afternoon, and imagined I saw every body and thing about me looking cold, selfish, and venal. In the morning, I set out by three o'clock, in another long coach, in which, luckily, were only two ladies, mother and daughter. During some conversation about our arrangements in the coach. I happened to use a Scottish phrase (*better do*). "O how that phrase delights me," said the youngest; "it reminds me of dear Scotland." This was touching an accordant string, and very great we grew immediately; for it appeared these ladies, who reside in a village near Bath, had been on a pilgrimage of love to visit their relations, who are some of the most respectable people in the west, and were now on their return. The old lady was a native of Scotland, and the young one fond of it to enthusiasm. This day, too, we past through a fine country; saw the bloody field of Bosworth, and past by Tewkesbury, where the usurper's corpse was carried. It is a fine old town, with houses in it, the most curious, antique fabrics imaginable, I dare say king-making
Warwick,

Warwick, and old Nevill, were in some of them. They were in a style of architecture different from any thing I had ever seen or imagined. The church is a stately edifice; the whole end of which is formed into a most noble window, that has a striking effect. We passed through Gloucester, large and populous, full of antique towers and spires, and surrounded by a very rich and beautiful country. The latter is picturesque, with frequent farm-houses, in the true old English style, and shady with orchards. There the country people were not bedizened, nor modernized, but had just the rusticity that I like in their buildings and appearance. In the evening, we reached the full majestic Severn, which is really a noble looking river. Then were my eyes regaled with a distant view of the Welsh mountains, and my ears with the sound of Bristol bells; these latter were to me like a knell, and my terrors increased every moment as I drew nearer. My new friends were all kindness and sympathy, and procured a chaise to carry me to Park Row at eleven, where I entered the door trembling, and

and was glad to find, by the stir through the house, that there was nothing funeral about it. I found my patient on a settee, with her kind friends about her. Worthy people, what do I not owe them! There is no doing justice to their merit and kindness. In two days she had an alarming relapse, occasioned by inflammation in the breast, for which the doctor ordered her to resort to the Wells, as soon as she could be moved with safety. It was a month before this was thought proper. We are now settled in very pleasant and convenient lodgings at the Hotwell-house, which I would describe to you, if you were not already surfeited with description. Now, thank God, I think I can, from our experience, recommend the Hot-Wells to every one threatened with a similar affection: and I am convinced the reason it is not generally effectual, is, that people defer too long coming to it. We have lived a month here in more profound retirement than ever we did in Laggan, not knowing any one in this quarter, except the Protheroes in their various branches, who are indeed inväriably kind. Yet, amidst
all

all this melancholy leisure, my mind has been so engrossed by intense anxiety for the absent, and reflections on the past, and melancholy anticipations of the future, that, except mere bills of health and necessary business, I have written to no creature but yourself. Now I hope you will have the grace to set a due value on this proud pre-eminence. One very stormy night lately, I could not close my eyes, nor yet read ; so I had recourse to my pencil, for relief to my overburdened mind, and here is the result of this vigil of sorrow, at least as much of it as I can transmit in a letter.

Yes, to my soul, those northern winds are dear,
That howling blast is music to my ear.

Blast, whose swift wing has swept our Alpine
snows,

The rocks of Morven, and the hill of roes,
Say, hast thou wak'd my wild harp's mournful
strings,

Bear'st thou the voice of sorrow on thy wings ;
Or hast thou rush'd along the sacred shade,
Where those my heart must ever weep, are laid ?
From my dear native land begun thy flight —
Bring tidings to my soul, O blast of night !
When shall I view again my narrow vale,
And hear a voice in every whispering gale !

See

See spring's first violets deck the hallow'd ground,
And trace my children's fairy footsteps round?
Then, in a tender trance of anguish'd joy,
To my fond bosom shall I clasp my boy,
View the soft radiance of his full blue eyes,
Warm the fresh roses on his cheek with sighs,
And, while his curls of waving amber flow
With varying lustre o'er his neck of snow,
The dawn of manly beauty let me trace,
The smile benignant of his father's face;
While hope auspicious points her wand of gold,
Where future days the latent bud unfold,
And bid hereditary virtues bloom,
To deck with kindred sweets a father's tomb!

Such are my meditations, and such my hopes. Now to tell you what I mean to do. I cannot remove Mary till the milder months arrive. Next week I go to Bristol, to dear good Mrs. Protheroe; the following one down to Devonshire, to take my last farewell of my dearest friend Mrs. F—r, whom 'tis scarce possible I shall ever see again. Perhaps this is not coldly and precisely prudent; but I have no notion of friendship that merely exhales in breath, or flourishes on paper. Cromwell's saints got at last above ordinances; and I have long since got above indulgences. Ease, and what the world calls

calls pleasure, I despise; I have no sacrifices to make to luxury or vanity; but a gratification so dear to my heart, so necessary to my peace of mind, I cannot, will not, deny myself. I know, there are those that will wonder at me, to say no more, for this single indulgence, self-devoted as I have ever been to the advantage and satisfaction of others. Yet it were hard to grudge this cordial drop in the cup of bitterness appointed for me.

* * * * *

I heard once of you through —; who I hope is like a good friendly hen, spreading her wings over my chickens in my absence. I get heroic epistles from my young housekeeper too, whose spirits seem to have risen to the occasion. I never feared her doing any thing wrong; yet, when I think of her diffidence and inexperience, I am agreeably surprised to find her so constantly and decidedly right.—Remember me in a manner at once affectionate and respectful to your mother; and tell your brother how much I was flattered by his kindness to Ourry. I am very warmly and truly yours.

LETTER XLII.

TO MRS. F—R, PLYMPTON.

April 4, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THOUGH trembling at the task which I have undertaken, I feel like a soul released from purgatory. What a dreadful winter I have gone through ! Yet how thankful I am, and ever shall be, that I have once more embraced you ; that I have renewed, and, I hope, strengthened, that affection which will last while any earthly tie remains.

How we do lament your dwelling among those who are unfitted to appreciate or comprehend you ! But you have many little comforts ; and that superior comfort of looking back to a well-spent life, and forward to the peace which passeth understanding.

Now, my dearest friend, in what words shall I acknowledge your active, cordial,

considerate kindness ! How it has supported my spirit, I cannot express. Pray tell Mrs. Cholwich I shall always remember her, not with gratitude only, but pleasure. I am charmed to think so much goodness has opened to itself such a source of innocent and laudable enjoyment to soothe the evening of life. Adieu !

LETTER XLIII.

TO MISS DUNBAR BATH.

Laggan, April, 11, 1803.

MY EVER DEAR HELEN,

You surely have not received my letter from Bath, that was sent thence by Mr. Guthrie, and which inclosed one for our mutual friend Mr. Mackay; for if you are the same unaltered and unalterable Helen, you would not let me blear my dim eyes, and wear out my grey goose quill with pompous

pous narration and veritable description, without once saying, "thanks, gentle Anne." But you never would make this acknowledgment: I must, in compliance with the intreaties of your great and grateful admirer, A. O. G., thank you for favours conferred on her, which are her nightly dream, and daily conversation.—Thus far I had written when your letter appeared, and my doubts vanished. I am happy that, in the irksome gloom of my exile, I had it in my power by a faithful though brief transcript of what occurred to me during my too rapid journey, to afford you any degree of amusement. I am now literally "weary worn with care," and a hundred objects press at once upon my attention; but when I can breathe at leisure, I shall tell you a few more tidings. Yet how painful it is to me to retrace the steps of that sad pilgrimage, where too much leisure for my present state of mind, made all that ever I lamented recur so forcibly to my sick imagination, bereft as I was of my comforter and support. Let me quote myself:

I had sigh'd o'er the bud, I had wept o'er the blossom,
 And beauty full blown I have liv'd to deplore;
 But the voice that was wont to speak peace to my
 bosom

Shall whisper compassion's soft language no more.

No more shall the bosom, when heaving with anguish,

In the kind breast of sympathy seek for relief;

While helpless I wander, or hopeless I languish,

Ah! cold is the heart that would share all my grief.

Except Mr. Prothero's family, whom I can never think of, or mention without esteem or gratitude, our correspondence with the living inhabitants of Bristol was very small indeed: but I could give some tidings from the dead, among whom I spent much time.

"The great, the gay, the noble, and the sage,
 And boastful youth, and narrative old age,"

are to be found there, from all parts of the kingdom. The most distinguished people come there to die; and the whole cathedral at Bristol, and church at Clifton, are hung with marble tablets, with ingenious and affecting inscriptions: two only I will particularize. Mason to his Maria;

"Take, holy earth, all that my soul held dear."

The

The other, a large tablet of exquisite white marble, in the form of a shield, with bass-relief figures, admirably designed and finished. Surely you have seen Sterne's Letters to Eliza; if not, do without delay read them. It is her monument I am describing. The inscription is simply thus:

" Sacred to the Memory of ELIZABETH DRAPER,
Wife to GENERAL DRAPER,
Who died at Bristol in the 28th year of her age.
She was eminent for Genius and Benevolence."

There is an urn, with a drapery hanging in such loose easy folds over it, that you are tempted to lift it up. On one side is a female figure of matchless grace and elegance, " her looks commercing with the skies." She leans pensively on the urn with one hand, and holds a flaming torch in the other. This represents Genius. On the other side is a figure of a less dignified air, but, " soft, modest melancholy, female," &c. who seems to look compassionately into a nest of young birds, which she holds in one hand, and feeds with the other. This is Benevolence. Beyond these, on one side, a broken column denotes the fragility of the

most perfect human forms, which moulder and decay like the noblest productions of human art and ingenuity. On the other, a palm, the emblem of immortality, appears like the undying spirit. But I must not indulge this descriptive mood, to which my journey northward would give full scope, had I leisure. Yet fain would I describe Devonshire, the English Arcadia; its pure streams, its pastoral hills, its rich vales, and softly genial climate. This, indeed, is the region of picturesque beauty. There I went to meet the spring, for there

“ She first unfolds her mantle green.”

There I spent part of an April-like March, in the enjoyment of a felicity that I did not hope to taste during my earthly pilgrimage. Fain would I give you a faint idea of the undiminished excellence, the unwithering spirits, and unchilled affections of her

“ Who heard with pain my parting sighs,
And long pursued me with her eyes.”

In short, of my own self same Anne Ourry, now Mrs. F—r. But a theme that wakes all the powers of imagination and memory,
and

and makes the heart and eyes overflow at once, deserves, and shall have a letter to itself.—The *book of books** has been delayed to my great vexation; for I believe, had it come in time, it might have obtained some notice in England, where Burns's mighty, overpowering genius has swept down the mounds of prejudice in its impetuous progress. Nay, it has absolutely made way for a partiality for Scotch productions. This merit may, no doubt, be divided with Campbell, who is indeed forte-piano in a very superior degree. My impression, however, thanks to the active zeal of my friends, is the largest ever printed in Scotland; but the same printer has the Court of Session Reports (formidable rivals indeed,) to print all winter. They were busy with my beloved old bard when I came away, and had only the subscribers names, (to me, and many others, the most interesting part) to finish. I know, by the mental pangs I have suffered for some days past, that the book is born, and you may expect to hear it some day

* Poems by the author, ludicrously so called by Miss Dunbar.

squalling at your door. But alas! those rough nurses, the critics, whose hands do not spare, nor their eyes pity! Bitterness may be borne,

“ But what high heart could ever yet sustain
The public blast of insolence and scorn ?”

and who believes, or cares for that want of leisure, and numberless other wants which you know of? among which I wish, for the sake of my repose, want of feeling could be included in the present instance. The Edinburgh Review is (woe is me!) a work of ability, from which there lies no appeal. These young censors, however, seem to have studied Shakespeare well; and to be envious of the character of Celario, of whom Olivia says,

“ O what a deal of scorn looks beautiful,
In the contempt and anger of his lip !”

They seem to expect the public will regard their *beautiful scorn* with the same partiality. For my part, I am rather inclined, like Orsino, to dread what they may prove.

“ When time has sow'd a grizzle on their case,”
as they are already so apt to be scornful.

I met two very agreeable women - at

Mr.

Mr. Thomson's one of whom is a sister of Mr. ——'s future. I like her much. Of your friend's choice, I can only say that I heard M—y speak highly of her, who knows her very well. Shut out, as she must be, in some measure, from the vain and busy world, by the peculiar nature of her duties, what a delicate and superior happiness must her's be, to whom is allotted the charge, so like that of a guardian angel, to preside, invisible to him, over the comforts and enjoyments of one of the worthiest and most amiable of mankind, still more beloved as he is more dependent!—Why have I not left room to tell you, how sweetly rural and sequestered I found my dwelling at Woodend*, or of the transport that filled the dear family, both native and adopted; when I arrived? The dear creatures are all improved. B— has done wonders, and my poor servants too, worthy creatures—it would be ungrateful not to record their fidelity. One misfortune I have to lament; my little boy speaks nothing but English. I am so pro-

* A sequestered but beautiful retreat near Stirling, to which the author removed some months after.

grieved at his losing the native tongue, though it appears to be the only loss which my family sustained in my absence. I regret your collateral losses; yet it is some consolation that your beloved sailor will be permitted to worship his household gods a while longer. Farewell. I have a thousand urgent demands on my attention. Though I cannot write, rest assured of the attachment of

Yours ever.

LETTER XLIV.

TO MISS DUNBAR, BOATH.

Laggan, May —, 1803.

MY DEAR HELEN,

VERY sick and very busy as I am, I am so charmed with your goodness, in being so mindful of me under such a pressure, that I lose no time in thanking you, and in congratulating you on the recovery of a mother, a friend, and an exemplary model of every social and domestic virtue.—Do me the justice

justice to believe, though urgently advised to take the measure you mention when I was in England, pressed for money in a land of strangers, that I not only rejected the proposal, but the rejection cost me so little effort, that I never once thought of telling you I had refused it. I should consider it as a stain to the memory of the most delicate and disinterested of human beings, if I, walking so long in the pure light of his spotless mind, should be induced to do any thing, that could bear the construction of disingenuity, to benefit his family. By the Divine blessing, there is little danger of their wanting what is necessary, and it is my duty to endeavour to limit their wishes within narrow bounds.—I know you now perfectly, in the simplicity and very similitude of A. O.'s description.—Your patience in illness raises you not a little with me. I can't bear the tribe of croakers; they are indeed

“ Like the black raven hovering o'er my peace.”

no less a bird of omen than of prey; for they really prey on my comfort. I do not believe these *dismalities* feel half what I do; if they did, they would be glad to seize a

respite when they could. I believe you very deserving, yet if these clouds did not intervene, you would have more than your share of those showers of manna allotted to support us in our travels through the wilderness. I do think you gather more than a Homer, when I take brothers, and music, and literature, into the account. I have my share too, though I am doomed to eat it, like the paschal lamb, with bitter herbs.—I hope there will be no war, and that your brother will take root and flourish in his native soil. What a feast must rural and domestic life be to an uncorrupted mind, after tossing about in a profession where the mode of life is so unnatural.—I will give my opinion, such as it will be after a hasty perusal, of the poem you had the goodness to send me; but you in return must give me yours of Dr. Cowper's Malachi. I did not tell you how very ill I have been of the Cowper-mania. I do not now mean the Doctor, but the delightful author of the Task. Read his letters and his life by Hayley, as I did, and you will find them

“Of power to take the captive soul,
—And lap it in Elysium.”

Your

Your young cousin's Poem to Science is a wonderful proof of premature abilities. It shews genius under the direction of wisdom, and does equal honour to his judgment and his poetical faculties. No wonder those, to whom the culture of so fair a flower has devolved, should carefully attend to its unfolding. But if it were mine I would not have it reared in England. Who will care for Scotland, after being bred in so fine a country? I would have a son of the Muses be a patriot and a true blue Scot. John Bull is not so much alive, either to the tender or ludicrous, as we are. And why? he has too much ease, and too many conveniencies, which he cultivates to a degree injurious to social life, and social love, and which will produce the same effect on us whenever we attain them. It is partly to this apathy, that irreligion, the source so fruitful of every evil, is owing. We struggle by the light that kindles darkness into day, through hunger, poverty, and hardship; our blest enthusiasm lights up the dreariest prospects with rays that stream from heaven. Earth-born views are so bounded, that the soul soon sickens with the
reiteration

respite when they could. I believe you very deserving, yet if these clouds did not intervene, you would have more than your share of those showers of manna allotted to support us in our travels through the wilderness. I do think you gather more than a Homer, when I take brothers, and music, and literature, into the account. I have my share too, though I am doomed to eat it, like the paschal lamb, with bitter herbs.—I hope there will be no war, and that your brother will take root and flourish in his native soil. What a feast must rural and domestic life be to an uncorrupted mind, after tossing about in a profession where the mode of life is so unnatural.—I will give my opinion, such as it will be after a hasty perusal, of the poem you had the goodness to send me; but you in return must give me yours of Dr. Cowper's Malachi. I did not tell you how very ill I have been of the Cowper-mania. I do not now mean the Doctor, but the delightful author of the Task. Read his letters and his life by Hayley, as I did, and you will find them

“Of power to take the captive soul;
—And lap it in Elysium.”

Your

of the cordial satisfaction I derived from reading Mrs. Rose's* elegant criticism. I insist upon it, that it betrays hardihood, insolence, and indeed some hypocrisy, to affect indifference about public opinion, when one has once left the safe and peaceful shades of privacy. Very reluctant indeed I was to plunge into the stream; but now that I am in, I most undoubtedly would wish to keep above water as long as possible, and consider such approbation as Mrs. Rose's as an excellent cork jacket to assist my floating. The Della Cruscas, and many others who fed the public with gilt gingerbread, to the great delight of all masters and misses who loved glitter and tinkle, took very suddenly with their admirers, and sunk as suddenly into deserved oblivion. Plain common sense, with few and simple ornaments, will only be relished by the lovers of nature, at its first appearance. But the power of those judges, in some respects, resembles that of a certain great aerial potentate—it is invisible, inde-

* Mrs. Rose, of Kilravock, whose taste and talents are universally known and respected in her own country.

finite, and unacknowledged ; yet daily increases and extends over all manner of people, and tongues, and nations, and many act under its influence who imagine themselves free agents. I will run this diabolical parallel no further, but merely observe, that, in the long run, good sense generally recognises and obeys, as arbiters of taste, those best qualified to fix the boundaries of opinion. Praise from the praiseworthy is of all gratifications the highest and most delicate ; and poor authors militant, who must fardels bear, &c. have much need of some such cordial. But after all, my locality, the narrow circle I walk round, must for ever preclude me from exciting general interest. By the pains you take to soothe my feelings with regard to the wrath of those who ought to thank me for my well meant efforts, I should fear I had expressed too strongly my opinions on that subject* ; but you ought never to indulge a thought that I could be

* Respecting the authenticity of the poems of Ossian, in an essay on that subject ; printed in the volume of poems published by the author of these letters.

displeased

displeased at the generous concern you express, lest it should be hurtful to my interest or reputation. In that matter I have gone to the barrier of truth, and beyond it I will not go for mortal; and for jesuitical concealments, I know no art but silence. If delicacy or prudence forbid being explicit on any subject, I can let it alone; but if I touch a subject* from which a thousand public discussions have long since drawn the veil of concealment, I will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I should like at any rate to be tried by my peers, that is, by people who know as much about the subject as I do. Far from being displeased with you, I consider this as an additional proof of that active, zealous, and unwearied friendship, which does honour to your own character, as well as to me, and which I often think of with admiration equal to my gratitude. No one has had warmer and more faithful friends, but you are the only invisible female friend who has made distinguished exertions on my behalf (for Miss M. I place to Mrs. F—r's accounts:)

* The translation of Ossian.

I have

I have lately made a great acquisition in an invisible male friend ; but, alas ! I can hope for little more than his parting blessing, for he is full of days and honour, and drawing near the verge of time, yet takes such a lively interest, and writes so like a gentleman, a christian, and a man of taste and intelligence. *More I must not say.* But I feel a kind of triumphant satisfaction, in finding that age has no power to damp those virtuous feelings which ennoble our nature, when they flow from the proper source. My dear worthy Mr. Arbuthnot* another instance of generous enthusiasm illuminating life to its closing period), is fast decaying, and has not been out of his room for many months.

* Robert Arbuthnot, Esq. late Secretary to the Trustees' Office at Edinburgh ; an elegant scholar and amiable man. He was nearly related to Dr. Arbuthnot, the well known associate of Pope and Swift, whom he resembles in steadiness of principle, cheerful equanimity, and entire resignation to the Divine will. He lived in intimacy with the most distinguished characters of his day for talents and for worth. The venerable Mrs. Montagu, Professor Beattie, author of the *Minstrel*, and the late excellent and much lamented Sir William Forbes, of Pit-*sligo*, were among his most particular friends.

The

The very last letter he wrote was to me, and if ever I see you, you shall see it, and be convinced I do not overvalue the writer.—I hope you received favourable accounts of all your brothers, particularly your beloved nautical hero, who, I imagine has a very ample share in the division of affection. He is quite in, or rather on his element now.—Pray have you seen Campbell's glorious effort on the Tyrtean lyre?

“ Her march is on the mountain wave,
Her home is on the sea.”

I wish you would tell me whether you admire Campbell's “ words that glow, and thoughts that burn,” as much as I do; and whether you are tempted to have a little Teraphim image of Cowper in your chamber for your private devotions; and whether you are very proud that so many women distinguished for elegance and intellect, as well as virtue and piety, gave up the pleasures of this vain world for a time, to extract the thorns from his heart, and pour in the wine and oil of consolation. I am always glad when I can warrantably boast of my own sex. We are better than men, upon the whole.

whole. Indeed the few amiable men I have known had many *femalities* in their tastes and opinions; but then I must allow the most respectable women have some masculine traits too. Nature does nothing wrong. It is those women who affect and assume the masculine character, that are insufferable. Tell Barr, for it will charm her, that the two most respectable women, and firmest, truest friends existing, are about to form an union with each other, by domesticating and living as much together as circumstances will admit, as I shall hereafter explain. She will know I mean Mrs. F. and Miss M. Have you seen my rhyming description of our house? Perhaps I may conclude it some quiet gloomy evening, with an account of the oaks of Wood-end, &c. O that you came to Edinburgh! Then would you surely visit "my cabin that stands by the wild wood," and cast a look of kindness on its inmates. Ourry, who now, thank God, enjoys perfect health, is always begging me to send her love to you. She will never have done speaking of Boath, which she considers as the abode of taste, elegance, and

and felicity. I wrote to our friend, congratulating him with heartfelt pleasure on his new connexion, and intreating that his beloved would *own receipt*. But no—so you see it is not you alone that are washed from recollection by the tide of happiness that has flowed in upon our correspondent. But fear not; we shall yet emerge; we are too *good* to be forgotten; and his chosen is too generous to engross him. Pray write, and be sure you tell me every thing, about every body. I am resolved to like all your people, because you like all mine so well. B—B—chr—n, for instance, who is elegance, vivacity, and truth personified. I can no more. Remember me to your excellent mother. I am not more pleased with her regard than yours, but I am prouder of it. Adieu my dear Helen; write soon, and think kindly and often of

Your affectionate friend.

LETTER XLVI.

TO MRS. F—R.

July, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

HAVE you got the hasty scrawl I wrote on my arrival at Woodend? * So many things crowd on my mind to oppress me, that I fear repetitions; but forgive and pity one who is indeed

“ Weary worn with care.”

I must apologize to you for what I fear has made you very angry, inscribing the Journal to you by name. When I passed through Edinburgh, on my way to England, Mr. Thomson and I held a council on the arrangement of the names, &c. in the poems. By mutual consent it was settled they should all be reduced to initials, excepting the Christian names, which marked nobody, and could not be guessed out of our own circle. When I was just stepping into

* Here the author resided for the years 1803, 4, 5.

the

the carriage, he said, "Do you mean to inscribe the Journal to Mrs. F——r?" "Certainly," said I, and there it rested. I took it for granted it should be as we had previously settled. Nothing could exceed my surprise when your name at length stared me full in the face on my return. There is no mortal harm in it, but one had rather not. I wished to sing in the shade too, but they tore off my gourd without mercy. I am ashamed in true earnest, but we shall keep each other in countenance. The whole passes better than I could have expected. Yesterday I heard that Lady ——, who is now near ninety, but in full possession of all her faculties, and has been accounted a person of refined taste and superior understanding, had one of these books sent her. She was much pleased, and sent to inquire about the author. You may believe Mr. Thomson gave the desired account, "*con amore*." The lady wrote again, inclosing a very handsome present, and adding a flattering and elegantly turned compliment to the "natural muse" of your friend. I am delighted with her praise because it is clear,
from

from the manner in which it is conveyed, that she has discernment to see, that I have just let myself alone, and neither studied the quaint simplicity of the new school, nor the uniform and laboured splendor of Darwin and his imitators. I have been thus minute, because I covet your admiration for this Scottish evergreen, I mean the lady. If one could steer clear of rocks and quicksands in early life, with such a dangerous companion; enthusiasm, that survives to warm and brighten our decline, is surely the last best friend of suffering humanity. Think of the dignity and interest attached to a character, that can relish the pure pleasures of taste and beneficence, at a period of life when a parcel of wretched Struldbruggs* become contemptible and wearisome to all about them, by being absorbed in cares and fears for the poor helpless individual self.—I am anxious to know what Miss M. thinks of this production. I should suppose her too fond of Darwin and Co. to relish my simplicity.

* See Swift's description of them in Gulliver's Travels to the Island of Laputa.

I am

—I am happy your *protégé*, after all, is like to turn out so well. The object of so much care and culture certainly ought to afford you some satisfaction, for the encouragement of female Quixotism. - - - - - I am pleased with my new establishment, though I still languish after the dear cottage, and my courteous peasants, who have more feeling and real sentiment than scores of pretenders, who spend readily what they borrow easily. I am very partial to the S. S. society. The few I meet with are kind and attentive. The worst is, that the neighbours are people quite beyond me; but then they are enlightened, liberal, intelligent. Their superiority is legitimate, and tolerable. You are not bluntly knocked down by a full purse without being weighed in the balance and found wanting. A well regulated mind, that knows both what it has, and what it wants will neither grovel nor climb, but remain stationary, in modest seclusion; though the few, who wish to cultivate an acquaintance from superior motives, will always assent to their right of congeniality; otherwise, an acquaintance

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with those you cannot be on a footing with, is very humiliating.—Have you read Hayley's life of that dear amiable saint, Cowper? I have no patience with Hayley for expatiating so minutely on Cowper's praise; whose life and works praise him beyond all that he can say. 'Tis just as if one should assure you that the sun was a bright luminary, and then gravely add, that the ocean was both wide and deep. Cowper wants no stilts to raise him in the esteem of any person possessing either feeling or understanding. Cowper is exactly every thing that I delight in. The bright gleams, by which his mental gloom is occasionally lighted up, throw a kind of mild splendor round his natural and original character. But I will neither anticipate your judgment, nor do what I have so much blamed others for. Examine him by his own light; and pray observe, in this illustrious instance, how necessary every man of genius, who is at the same time a man of virtue, finds the charm of female society. The graces, the sprightliness, the softness, and the innocence, let me add, of female conversation, the tenderness of female sympathy

pathy, and the fidelity and warmth of female friendship, are cordials to a mind too delicately toned for the rough tumults of the corrupt world. What a constellation of female worth shed its sweet influence round this inspired sufferer! It is worth consideration, how many of the great and gay, who have made a noise and bustle on the stage of life, have sunk into quick and deep oblivion, while we follow with eager interest every step this obscure, unobtrusive mortal makes among his flowers or greens, and are more interested in his very hares and robins, because he loved and tended them, than in all that ever dazzled and amused us among the children of art and vanity. -----
 Tell me how your book society relish the nosegay of hether, birch, and cannach, which I have sent them.—Are you deep in scriptural studies? Does not your heart burn within you, when you throw the world at a distance, and drink deep at the true fountains of inspiration?

* * * * *

'Tis a fatal fashion that prevails of late,
 of calling every one a methodist who goes

a little out of the beaten track of mechanical forms. I dare say this illiberal cant drives many into sects, merely for a sanctuary from ridicule. For it does not require so much courage to share ridicule with a body, as to face it alone.

“O bless’d retirement, friend to life’s decline,
Retreats from care which *ever* must be thine.”

What sacrifice can be too great to make for peace and liberty? And yet I am not quite satisfied with your retreat. This should not be said. Farewell tenderly.

LETTER XLVII.

TO MRS. F—R.

Glasgow, July 13, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is a sure proof that I was very little capable of writing, that your kind letter is thus long unanswered. I can’t easily make you understand what a cordial it was to me,
when

when I was so "weary worn wi' care," that nothing less than the soothings of friendship, and the dim distant views of peace beyond this world, could allay the fever of my mind. But before I say one word of the ordeal through which I have past, I will answer your letter. - - - - - I am glad, that others doing what they ought, relieves you in some measure from the dilemma you were in about your *protégé*. To send him fluttering away thus early and unformed, from the nest where he has been so tenderly cherished, must have been a severe alternative, after all the pains you have taken. When one does a generous action merely from the pure delight it gives the heart, 'tis very mortifying to be obliged to stop short before the plan of beneficence is completed. I am greatly pleased matters continue on the old footing. It would be a dismal blank to your warm, active mind, to have no object near to exercise its affections. Now, at the distance at which you keep him, he excites interest, without teasing and wearing you out. And then your holidays are so joyful to him. Now how shall I briefly, and at the same

time clearly shew you the track I have trodden since I left you. -----
Alas! for my beloved cottage! But I will not distress you with the retrospect. You will be pleased to hear that nothing could exceed the general kindness and considerate and friendly attention of my neighbours that were. As it is, I see much beauty and many comforts about my new abode. When the mists that over-cloud my mind are a little dispelled, I hope to taste, what I now merely look on with cold critical approbation. You, who live so much in the fair creation of your fancy, need not be told what a pang it awakens to part with a home, where every thing, in a manner, owes its existence to you; where one has suffered and enjoyed what self-lovers can form no idea of, and which is endeared, by being, in a manner, rendered sacred to the memory of those we love.—The letters with the accounts of my poor father's death came before I left the country, but were concealed from me till the bitterness of the other parting was over. ----- What an asylum, what a comfort, has that dwelling been to many others, besides

besides the family, that inhabited it! There indeed social life, and social love, seemed the warmer for being compressed within narrow bounds. There I lived and moved, and had a being, in some degree useful and interesting to others. Hereafter I shall indeed exist; but my highest hope must be to depend

“ Quiet, tho’ sad, the remnant of my days,”
far, far from my old haunts, my old habits, and my old associates. I will not balance the account, for you will do that for me, and reproach my croaking to boot. I am all penitence and submission, so pray be moderate.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO MRS. SMITH, JORDAN HILL.

Woodend, Sept. 12, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You wonder I have been so long answering your kind letter; I too wonder, and

must account for my silence in a manner no less wonderful. Do you know my mind has at length lost all its elasticity. That happy faculty, that inestimable cork jacket, by the aid of which, however deep I might plunge, I still rose buoyant on the waves of calamity, is gone. Here I am, safe ashore, and yet I gasp in amaze, like a creature removed from its native element. Time and habit may amend this; but at present I am, like Orpheus, at the hazard of my peace, looking back to the gloomy region I have left behind, and from a somewhat similar motive;

“ For so to interpose a little ease,

Do my frail thoughts dally with surmise.”

All this is very fine, and very fanciful, you will say; but the plain matter, I believe, is, that my mind was so exhausted by a long succession of painful exertions, that quiet, now I have attained it, is like the faint stupor of a person cast ashore from a wreck. Yet I cannot call it leisure, either; for, arranging and adjusting every thing belonging to so large a family, in an entire new establishment, kept me very busy, and when I was not busy, I was stupid. My patient, however,

however, comes well on. My Mother grows more composed, walks out in the air, and her sleep and appetite return. Little Grant the dear son of my lamented Charlotte, is another of my tender cares. I thought him puny and brought him here for a little country air, and that he might know and love me. But he will not stay long enough, nor come back soon enough, to form or renew affection. His father will never be at ease till he gets him home; nor would it suit me to keep him.

Of this place, suffice it to say, that the house is excellent, capacious, airy, and well laid out. It is sheltered, at a small distance behind, by craggy rocks, and surrounded on three sides by pleasant woods, thro' which there are many openings, walks, and sloping glades; and for birds it is a perfect aviary; I could not have conceived so many to be contained in one wood of this extent; they find covert in various beautiful shrubs, which, with woodbine and hasel, abound greatly. These woods too are diversified by every kind of tree that bears our climate. The front of the house commands an extensive and varied

prospect over a level and fertile country, bounded by mountains lofty and wild, whose fine marked contour is always noble, and at sunset beautiful. This same house stands in a circular inclosure, or lawn; it is surrounded by a wild hedge, after the Devonshire manner, mixed with fruit-trees, and allowed to run into a little becoming disorder, which nearly emulates "the negligence of nature, wide and wild." In short, the place is neither trimmed nor rolled, and I like it the better. Yet it has no air of savage wildness, but on the contrary, looks very tranquil and domestic, the garden excepted, which is in a most slovenly undress, and looks as if its hair had not been combed this dozen years. Yet it is so wood-surrounded, musical and sequestered, that I like it much. It lies on a slope, and a little brook runs thro' the bottom of it; opposite, a wood rises "shade above shade" on an ascent. Yet none but the owls and blackbirds seem to agree with me in liking this dark and shady sanctuary of peace, for such it seems to me. I, accustomed to stem the torrent, am not afraid to encounter with its ruggedness

ness, and flatter myself that the efforts I make to scatter its gloom, will, in some degree, dissipate my own. I meet with much civility from some fine people who live near us. I am, on the whole, thankful, yet not satisfied. There is a cold void in my heart. I am accustomed to love and be beloved by those around me, and I miss the cordial glance of sympathy and kindness. It is no one's fault: but it is my misfortune:

The voice that was wont to speak peace to my bosom
Shall whisper compassion's soft language no more!

I do not solely allude to the breach that is irreparable. There are a set of good kind of people, perhaps unsusceptible of the delicacies of friendship, whom long habit, and the interchange of kind offices, has endeared to one; who sincerely lament our misfortunes, and cordially enjoy our comforts; whom we regard with that kind of instinctive affection, which a susceptible mind will bestow on the trees that have sheltered, or the brooks that have murmured to us for any length of time. These ties, which, tho' not tender, I find very tough, are

broke by change of residence ; and here are no materials to spin them anew. The common people here are so gross, so sordid, they neither love nor esteem their superiors. And how should they, when these last regard them with such scornful indifference ? The middle rank, that most valuable and happiest link in the chain of society, which superadds the polish of the upper, in some degree, to the strength of the lower, and was wont to connect and strengthen both ; that class of society where I might say, with the Psalmist, " all my delights are placed," has here, I think, ceased to exist. I have my children, and they are worthy of my love, but necessarily more each others companions, than mine. I feel this desideratum, more for their sake than my own. I ought to be pleased, and shall, I hope, be tranquil ; but not yet. Do not tire of this querulous length of letter, for it has done me much good to tell you all this, and to think how sorry you will be.—Thank James for his notable exertions, as my collector and treasurer. Every body finds collecting those petty debts up hill work. Miss M. though naturally mild

mild and timid, carried through her part of that business, with a heart of iron and face of brass, and found occasion for both.

You are too happy and too lazy to visit me here; and yet you have done many idler things, and I should be so thankful! With love to all your dear fireside, believe that I shall always be much yours.

LETTER XLIX.

TO MRS. F—R,

Woodend, Oct 4, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is not easy to describe the joy I felt on reading your letter. I cannot bear the cruel indelicacy of aggravating the disadvantages one can't possibly remedy. Yet I was by no means satisfied with your situation. It seemed so very uncongenial, especially now that the chief ties that first held you there are broken. This new arrangement does
my

my heart good. The place, society, and the footing on which you are to stand, are quite to my mind. My spirit sunk at the thought of your living always where you had no particular attachment, no kindred mind, none who thoroughly understood your character. I think I could not desire to live a day longer, than while my heart was warmed by an affectionate intercourse with those I love. The languor, which is the very worst consequence of the decline of life, checks that eagerness in cherishing our connections with the absent, which youth and enthusiasm produce; and to be completely blended, nay, kneaded, into the mass of beings who live merely for themselves, and look not out of that narrow circle, is a most unnatural state for you. It would indeed be losing you to those that love you best.

* * * * *

Here you have, I fear, a repetition, for I think I sketched my parting pilgrimage before—
—Our large family is managed with more order and ease than you could expect. But indeed we have the advantage of abundant scope; our house is large as well as pleasant;
and

and the inhabitants are very willing to please each other, which is a material point.

* * * * *

I have my poor dear Charlotte's little boy with me, and it pleases me to cherish her memory in him. He is lively and good tempered; what more he will be, time must shew.—I was highly gratified lately by a letter from a person I never saw or heard of, conveying to me a compliment on the work you wot of, most flattering to me, for my principles were as much applauded as my abilities. It contained moreover——. If I could find in my heart to part with it, I would send you the letter, that you might admire its simple elegance.

“Blush grandeur, blush!—proud courts withdraw your blaze!”

Adieu! dear, very dear friend.

LETTER L.

TO MRS. F—R.

Glasgow, Jan. 9, 1804.

THE cheerful tenor of your last letter was a great cordial to my spirits. I rejoice exceedingly at the prospect of your removal; not that I expect, or would have you expect, that every thing and every body will be quite to your wish where you are going. In vain would we encircle the globe by successive removals, in search of an accumulation of comforts; those comforts, which the frugal, though bountiful hand of Providence, has scattered in various proportions, to alleviate the sorrows and sufferings of a state only meant as the pathway to felicity. Yet of these ingredients of happiness, on which an elegant and sensible mind is most dependant, I am confident many await you; and, amidst all the wealth of Flora, which your industrious ingenuity had lavished round, and all the

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the softness of a genial climate, I always thought of you with an anxious and desponding tenderness, well knowing your heart was not at home, could not be at home among people who so little comprehended you. Your warmth of heart and energy of character were quite beyond them, and you would have continued a stranger after fifty years residence. I would carefully banish from my mind the absurd and silly fastidiousness of working myself up to relish no conversation but that of wits and scavans; it would be a regimen of pickles and marmalades, without bread or water. Common sense, and common integrity, with some degree of heart, I insist on in my companions. Knaves and fools I will positively have nothing to do with. Some one mind that thinks and feels as I do myself, is indispensable. 'Tis like my morning tea, the only luxury I care for, which habit has made necessary, morally necessary, because this favourite indulgence, this mental banquet, meliorates my temper and expands my heart. I do not pity any person merely for being deprived of pleasure, however innocent,

innocent, or however elegant. The time of trial is hourly shortening, and the hopes of futurity proportionally strengthening, to those who look forward to another state of existence. But, I think, where one finds the kindly affections continually chilled and repelled, and the disposition to spleen and censure as often excited, it may be truly called a state of temptation. - - - - do very well for each other, and with each other I shall gladly leave them, now you are likely to get out of their dense atmosphere. The more I think of your change, the more I am pleased with it. Miss M.'s constant attention to you at such a distance, has demonstrated the strength of her attachment, and established her claim to yours. Johnson says, Pope and Martha Blount were necessary to each other, because the events of their past lives were pictured on each others minds. It is one of many attractions you have towards each other, that the same may very truly be said of you. Of your mutual friendship I shall only say,—may it be perpetual! Adieu!

LETTER LI.

TO MISS MALLIET.

Woodend, Jan. 11, 1804.


DEAR MADAM,

I received a letter two days ago, from our dear friends Mrs. F—r, in which she mentions your having the goodness to execute a commission, &c. I was proud to find you so solicitous about having the books. By the time you receive this, I hope they will have arrived ; for I ordered them to be sent to you some time ago. I gladly seize this occasion of expressing the sense I entertain of the zealous interest you and good Mrs. M. have taken in my affairs ; and how useful your kind exertions proved in the unlooked for emergency which occasioned my journey to England. We were much flattered to hear you were disappointed at our not taking the London road. I never made such a sacrifice of inclination to prudence in my life, as I did in coming home by the

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west road. I am not clear I could have done it, had I been sure of getting credit for my principal motive, which, in truth and verity, would have been to see you ; but I was sure of meeting with many Eliabs who would say to me; “ Why camest thou hither, and with whom hast thou left those few lambs in the wilderness? Surely I know the pride and naughtiness of thy heart ; to see the *city* art thou come.” Did you know the struggle it cost me, you would give me credit for self-command and self-denial ; qualities very necessary for a person, whose duty it is to act and think solely for others. I little thought, during my remaining pilgrimage through this world, to taste so much of the pure and tender satisfaction which connects with our early warm affections, as I enjoyed at ——. Have you ever met with any body like our friend? I think neither you or I need lament the want of a sister, while we divide between us a heart so pure, so liberal, and so faithful. To know the world so well as she does, and yet retain all her integrity—untainted by its corruption, unbiassed by its prejudices! In this particular she stands unrivalled

unrivalled and alone. Vehement she is; but if she were not, she would not love us so well as she does. She is indeed “made of the firm truth of honour.” I cannot enough admire the resources her active and affectionate mind creates to itself. Her garden, which she has half animated; her birds, who seem to have caught a spark of her own vivid intellect; and her young *ultra marine* pupil whom she has refined and civilized almost against the bias of nature, are only less wonders than herself. Yet, though she will always create something to love and take solace in, 'tis grievous to see the benevolence of that kind, and the energy of that ardent mind, evaporate among those good little gossiping women at —, who understand her just as well as I do algebra. Her strength of character puzzles and overawes them. They are afraid of being scorched by that lambent flame, by which we should be cheered and delighted. Pity, that a person so made for all the duties and enjoyments of friendship, should live in a state that may well be called a solitude of the heart!



LETTER LII.

TO GEO. MACINTOSH, ESQ. DUNCHATTAN.

Melville Place, Nov. 23, 1806.

MY DEAR SIR,

DREADED as it was, I felt the shock of the sad intimation of your late loss very forcibly indeed. What a light is extinguished ! An event of this kind comes home to every one's bosom ; for what, that we most wish for, or aspire to, did not your lamented daughter possess ? robust health, singular strength of mind and body, unequalled talents, unclouded prosperity, rich possessions, and fair prospects ; and how soon have all those high prized blessings fled like a dream !

My dear Sir, if your sorrows were proportioned to the value, either of what you have lost, or are too likely to lose, who could console you, or what could fill up the void ? Nature must have its way ; you must

must mourn for the past, and tremble for the future. As the wealthy must needs pay heavier taxes for their luxuries, those who possess superior wealth, in friends on whom nature has bestowed her richest endowments, must pay a proportionate tax to calamity, when bereaved of them. The hand which bestows good and evil, in wise and just proportions, has been singularly bountiful to you. How many blessings have you been permitted to enjoy, and to diffuse to others! Shall Job receive good at the hands of God, and shall he not receive evil also? How few can look back on so much felicity as has fallen to your share; and how, my dear friend, could you consider yourself as heir to the common lot of humanity, had this cup continued full? "Whom he loveth he chasteneth." I will not vainly endeavour to dam up the stream that nature appointed to flow; nor can I expect that you can, while the wound is recent, bow down to the Divine decree, with that degree of submission which will enable you to compute and arrange your remaining blessings. Yet, I trust, when the overburdened heart has
in

in some measure discharged its sorrows, the remembrance of a well spent life, the blessings of HIM that was ready to perish, the contemplation of a promising and flourishing progeny ; and, above all, the blessed hope of salvation through the merits of a Redeemer, may yet lead you to own, with devout resignation, " that tho' weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning." Yes, in the blessed morning of the resurrection it will come, to all " who have tasted that God is gracious." That you dear Sir, may be among that happy number, is the sincere wish, and earnest prayer of your affectionate and truly sympathising friend.

LETTER LIV.

TO GEO. MACINTOSH, ESQ. DUNCHATTAN.

Melville Place, Dec. 5, 1806.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your letter, and thank you for the particulars (sad as they are.)
which

which it contains, I do indeed pity you from my very soul. And now, even now, after the heavy tribute is paid, and the grave has actually closed on the object of so much affection, admiration, and sorrow; both Mary and I have a difficulty to persuade our hearts and imaginations of the reality of what has happened. It seems, somehow as if so much life could not die; as if a person so active, and who occupied so conspicuous a place on the theatre of existence, could not thus suddenly, thus prematurely be withdrawn from it. It is a melancholy gratification to the surviving friends of characters of such distinction, that their departure gives a kind of electric shock to the sphere in which they moved; and that they live to memory long, long after the vulgar dead are swallowed in oblivion. Besides the more solid and rational consolations I formerly mentioned to you, all that public sympathy and extensive celebrity can give, are yours. The views of a future world, the vast conceptions that distend the mind, when by the aid of faith (even on this side time) "Death seems swallowed up in immortality,"

tality,"—these are the sure and lasting refuge ; yet the weakness of suffering mortality naturally lays hold of every aid on which the agonized mind can for a moment repose itself. This is pardonable; for He, who ordained that we should suffer and should mourn, has also so made us, that a general sense of the value and importance of our loss prevailing around us, is to us a kind of temporary consolation.

Mrs. Macintosh's fortitude, in bearing her loss, and the steady and affecting retrospect she took of her beloved child's talents and virtues, from their early blossom to full maturity, is just what I should have expected from a mind like hers, so strong, and yet so tender. To her this letter should have been addressed, but that I suppose she would scarce in her present weak state, be permitted to read it. I do not wonder that every thing that belonged to the late extinguished light, should, by those who had the happiness of her friendship, be considered as relics. Her intimacies and attachments lying among those whose abilities and attainments did honour to the sex, there is no doubt

doubt but her memory will be honoured, and adorned as such a memory ought.

May the Divine aid, and peculiar blessing, also be with you in this day of trial, like a rainbow on the cloud, to shew that He will not utterly destroy. Wherever I am at present, and whatever doing, my imagination is at Dunchatton ; no more, alas ! the refuge of distress, or the haunt of social cheerfulness and domestic comfort.—Write, dear Sir, to me, who am interested in every thing, and to whom you can express your feelings without restraint. O, if your dear friend and mine can be for a moment detached from sickness and sorrow, to remember the absent, the affectionate, and the afflicted, tell her, the sympathy that at this moment fills my heart and eyes, is very deep and very tender. What would I not do to help her, if I could ! All past kindness rises in review before me. O, what a foreboding agony seized me the day I parted with her, I have said too much ; but I have done. Providence is every day raising up new friends to me ; but they are distant and unknown, and never can replace the old, no
never !

